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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Keeping Above the Thought of Drudgery: Ontario Farm Women's Work and Prescriptive Literature, 1890-1914

By

Artica Naomi Nind ©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of **Master of Arts**.

DEPARTMENT OF **HISTORY**

Edmonton, Alberta
Spring, 1994

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FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the work experiences of farm women in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Ontario. Contemporary sources presented diverse images of farm women's work according to their particular reform agendas. Women were depicted variously as labouring drudges, indispensable members of farm enterprises, leisurely homemakers and field workers. Agrarian reformers encouraged women's farm work, both revealing and depreciating their efforts. Domestic reformers promoted a sphere of womanhood that restricted farm women's interests to the home. The realities of farm women's lives are revealed by their own accounts and by inconsistencies in reform rhetoric. What emerges is a picture of farm women who were occupied with both household and farm work; women who had little leisure and few luxuries. When they found time to comment about their work, farm women did not identify themselves as homemakers, but as farmers.

Whether farm women were drudges or whether they were women with opportunities and options, is presented as the central debate in literature about farm women. Those who perceive farm women's disadvantaged state often rely upon prescriptive ideas about what a woman should be like.

This thesis demonstrates how early Women's Institutes failed to represent farm women. The maternal feminist goals of the rural elite dominated Institute agendas. They perpetuated the idea of separate spheres, encouraging farm women's proper place as homemakers.

The Ontario agrarian reform movement is explored in the context of the social reform movement of the period. Key themes in rural reform agendas are presented and farm journals are examined as a source of such agendas. Representations from such sources revealed as much as they distorted farm women's work.

In contrast, the realities of farm women's work are examined. Mixed farming and difficult economic times ensured that Ontario farm women's work was highlighted in this period. Women were encouraged in their work by promoters of Ontario agriculture, especially educators. Farm women's own observations of their work are included. This analysis reveals that farm women's work experiences and their ideas about their work were determined more by class than gender.

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INTRODUCTION

> It seems to me the 1 [sic] thing necessary...especially with farmers' wives, is to keep above the thought of drudgery.[1]

An underlying debate in recent studies of farm women is whether farm women suffered in their vocations or whether they did well.[2] While some historians have concluded that farm women were, essentially, labouring drudges, others have written of farm women's achievements. Often, negative portrayals of farm women's lives emerge from a reliance upon contemporary prescriptive literature as a source. Literature about nineteenth-century farm women that tends to concentrate on prescriptive ideas about women's "proper place" ignores a portrayal of farm women's actual experience.

Such a negative portrayal of farm women's lives is presented in "A Perfect Farmer's Wife: Women in 19th-Century Rural Ontario".[3] The author concludes that "...domesticity and dependence were the essential qualities of women in rural nineteenth-century Ontario."[4] While she recognizes the economic conditions of rural life where

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[1] Mrs. Whealy, "Saving Steps" (read before S. Simcoe Institute) "The Report of the Women's Institutes", Sessional Paper No. 24, Sessional Papers of the Province of Ontario(hereinafter Sessional Papers), 1907, p. 110.

[2] Social history and women's history have focused on the experiences of "ordinary" people and everyday life, and often reflect feminist goals of understanding the origins of "woman's place". Recent histories of women extend to the past issues raised by the current women's movement. This trend is examined in more detail in Nancy F. Cott and Elizabeth H. Pleck, eds. A Heritage of Her Own: Toward a New Social History of American Women (New York, 1979); see especially pp. 9-24. Scholars attempt to locate the sources and the purposes of social constructions which have restricted women in the past, in order that they may better understand women's place in current society. Domesticity and patriarchy, the ideologies and practice, are key themes. The field of inquiry promoted by social and women's history has resulted in a growing interest in farm women.

[3] Rosemary Ball, "A Perfect Farmer's Wife: Women in 19th-Century Rural Ontario", Canada: An Historical Magazine Volume 3, No. 2. (December 1975), pp. 3-20.

[4] Ibid., p. 19.

"...each farm was a self-contained unit, ...(and) where servants were scarce and expensive"[5], Ball only focuses upon women's household work. She describes a bleak existence for farm women:

> ...stoicism, in the face of adversity, became second nature to these women...fed by deep introspection, an attempt, no doubt, to comprehend, at least inwardly, the physical and emotional costs of life in rural Ontario...[6]

Ball emphasizes the difficulties for farm women in her essay, but farm women cannot be looked upon as: "poor faded women (with) hair the colour of last year's grass and teeth gone in front."[7] Such an interpretation diminishes their lives and portrays them as victims.[8] Farm women worked within the context of their real-life situations to realize their goals. They had a more positive view of their lives. The opinions of eighty-two per cent of farm women in a 1921 essay competition that posed the question "Do you want your daughter to marry a farmer?", responded in the affirmative. Both the essay competition and a study of Manitoba farm women's work in the same year stressed the interdependence of family in farm work.[9] While a rough division of labour existed, family members shared in all aspects of farming. Methods of work and women's relationships with those around them were significant factors in the determination of farm women's experiences. The disadvantages experienced by farm women were alleviated by the sharing of work and mutual dependence which characterized the farm family unit. Women achieved a measure of autonomy and recognition in family farm enterprises.[10]

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[5] Ibid., p. 7.

[6] Ibid., p. 15.

[7] Words of Nellie McClung quoted by Pauline Rankin, "The Politicization of Ontario Farm Women", in Linda Kealey and Joan Sangster, eds. Beyond The Vote: Canadian Women and Politics (Toronto: 1989), p. 310. This was a typical stereotype of farm women in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and this idea is still common in studies of them today. In her study of women on the Canadian frontier, Sarah Sundberg disparages the tendency to generalize that an unrelenting workload formed farm women's opinions: "...some found it drudgery, others did not." "Farm Women on the Canadian Prairie Frontier: The Helpmate Image", in Veronica Strong-Boag and Anita Clair Fellman, eds. Rethinking Canada: The Promise of Women's History 1st ed. (Toronto: 1986), p. 104. One contemporary commented: "A great many think farm life a drudgery. Well, it may be to some, but I do not think so...." "How to Keep the Country Girl on the Farm" by 'Marie' ***Canadian Farm***, March 10, 1911, p. 3.

[8] A recent study expresses the disadvantaged state of farm women most strongly. In her Agrarian Women: Wives and Mothers in Rural Nebraska, 1880-1940 (Chapel Hill: 1992), Deborah Fink seeks to counter the agrarian myth of the equality of women in farming, and presents farm women as an exploited labour force who gained little from their participation. While Fink recognizes women's roles in farm production gave them a measure of control over their lives, she sees the patriarchal organization of labour within the nuclear family as a negating influence on this liberating potential. In her depiction of rural life for women, Fink focuses on women's isolation, domestic violence and the "nebulous" returns on their labour.

The Turner thesis about the liberating effect of the frontier on the lives of its inhabitants[11] has spurred debate on whether or not women benefitted from the frontier experience. Those who argue that the frontier offered women advantages assert that they enlarged the scope of their "sphere", and that the ideals of "true womanhood" never really applied to a large number of frontier women. The frontier, it is argued, offered women success, recognition and a measure of independence never before experienced, as their efforts were as vital as men's in the building up of new communities.[12]

Studies of farm women on the Canadian frontier have established the importance of women's role in homesteading and have successfully presented women as central players in frontier life.[13] These women did not necessarily confine themselves to the dictates of what women should be like or what they should do. Farming on the frontier demanded that women cross the bounds of what others termed "acceptable behaviour". This included participating in fields of work deemed unsuitable for women:

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[9] M. Kinnear, "'Do you want your daughter to marry a farmer?': Women's Work on the Farm, 1922.", in D. H. Akenson, ed. Canadian Papers in Rural History Volume 5 (Gananoque, Ontario: 1988), pp. 138-153.

[10] In a society that favoured male control over institutions, women's contributions did not necessarily permit greater autonomy in terms of economic, social or legal power in marriage or in the community. In the words of one historian: "Women helped to build and participate in the institutions which would continue to constrain them." Eliane L. Silverman, "Women's Perceptions of Marriage on the Alberta Frontier", in David C. Jones and I. MacPherson, eds. Building Beyond the Homestead (Calgary: 1985), pp. 60-61.

[11] Frederick Jackson Turner, The Frontier in American History (New York: 1947).

[12] See Sandra L. Myres, Westering Women and the Frontier Experience, 1800-1915 (Albuquerque: 1982). See also Naomi E. S. Griffiths, Penelope's Web: Some Perceptions of Women in European and Canadian Society (Toronto: 1976).

> In only a few instances did women tell me that men's and women's work seemed not to overlap at all. It would be more accurate to say that in some families, the women did not participate in the husbands' work; in very few indeed.[14]

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Ontario farm women worked alongside men in family farm enterprises where mutuality of effort was the key to success. In contrast to the separate spheres that characterized the work of urban middle-class men and women, farm women's work was not separate or clearly defined from men, nor were farm women displaced from their essential productive roles. This was particularly true of such areas as Bruce and Grey Counties where marginal farming and labour deficiencies ensured women's continued full participation in farming.

Established separate and shared work patterns of Ontario farm families had emerged by the mid-nineteenth century.[15] Women's labour was concentrated in the house and nearby surroundings. The care of children, cleaning, food preparation and preservation, sewing and laundry were mainly their responsibilities. Women also usually cared for livestock, raised chickens, milked cows, picked fruit, grew vegetables and preserved both.

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[13] In the words of Eliane Silverman: "...we must move beyond the rhetoric about wives as unwilling participants in the westward movement or as willing 'helpmates', in short as adjuncts to men." In "Women's Perceptions of Marriage", p. 50.

[14] Eliane L. Silverman, The Last Best West: Women on the Alberta Frontier, 1880-1930 (Montreal, 1984), p. 98. See also Susan Jackel, A Flannel Shirt and Liberty: British Emigrant Gentlewomen in the Canadian West, 1880-1914 (Vancouver: 1982). Such an interpretation challenges the view that frontier women were greatly affected by the ideology of separate spheres. Glenda Riley, though, has argued that: "The orientation and direction of women's lives were forged far more by gender than by region, male pursuits or era." She asserts that female settlers pursued a comparable set of duties and interests in every frontier setting and that their focus continued to be domestic. The Female Frontier: A Comparative View of Women on the Prairie and on the Plains (Kansas: 1988), p. 196.

[15] The categorization of women's labour into household work and farm work is useful because it demonstrates the diversity of women's work; it also recognizes gender divisions of labour on the farm.

Men's work was primarily in the fields. They were responsible for crop production, preparation of hay and grain for consumption, as well as maintenance of farm and household equipment. Men also laboured off the farm, helping other farmers in return for their assistance.[16] Other operations brought the labour of men and women together. Together, men and women cared for farm animals and processed their products on a daily basis. The sharing of subsistence and capital production on the farm was commonplace.

Both men and women extended their work to various fields of labour when the good of the farm dictated. When conditions warranted, women ploughed, harvested and reaped crops. Usually women assisted in the fields more often than men shared in housework.[17] The periodic heavy burden of work that crop planting and harvesting engendered meant that all farm hands would be put to work in this area at certain times during the year. The success of farm crops was seen by both men and women as crucial to the farm welfare and took precedence over all other farm work at planting and harvest times.[18] Men assisted women in especially burdensome chores as well, as in the planting and harvesting of the garden, the carrying of water on laundry day, and even in churning butter:

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[16] Marjorie Griffin Cohen Women's Work, Markets, and Economic Development in Nineteenth-Century Ontario (Toronto: 1988), pp. 73-74.

[17] Farm women's involvement in "farm" activities is more apparent than men's "household" activities in this study, although this discrepancy might be resolved by further study of farm documents, such as letters and diaries, as found by Nancy Grey Osterud in Bonds of Community: The Lives of Farm Women in Nineteenth-Century New York (New York: 1991).

[18] "In times of hurry our girls will willingly assist at any work suited to their strength." "Women as Farmers", ***The Farmer's Advocate***, November 1884, p. 332. In 1911, a picture entitled "A Jolly Time at Farm Work" was promoted by ***Farm and Dairy and Rural Home***. It showed "Miss Gladys and Miss Muriel Kennedy" working alongside their father "Mr. Garfield Kennedy" in the fields on their farm in Victoria County in 1911. ***Farm and Dairy and Rural Home***, October, 1911, p. 8.

> There are thousands of persons in this country who are trying to make butter 'come'. They are dashing away at the churn by the hour. When the women get tired they get their husbands to put an apron on and give a hand.[19]

Urban development and the development of the frontier are commonly seen to have displaced women from their traditional tasks and role as economic partners and restricted their work to household maintenance and care of children.[20] Urban development is seen to have promoted the separation of men and women into public and private spheres -- men into the sphere of business and politics and women into the sphere of the home.[21] But the "cult of true womanhood"[22], an ideology of domesticity, separate spheres and the civilizing mission of women was the special refuge of the middle classes and the rural elite and not farm women.[23]

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[19] Professor H. H. Dean (Ontario Agricultural College), 'Science and Practice in Dairying', "Annual Reports of the Butter & Cheese Associations", Sessional Paper No. 24 Sessional Papers, 1898, p. 22.

[20] This is argued in the case of Ontario by Leo Johnson, "The Political Economy of Ontario Women in the Nineteenth Century", in Janice Acton, Penny Goldsmith and Bonnie Shepard, eds. Women At Work: Ontario, 1850-1930 (Toronto: 1974), pp. 13-31. See also R. Marvin McInnis, "Women, Work and Childbearing: Ontario in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century", Histoire Sociale: Social History Volume 24, No. 48. (November 1991), pp. 237-262.

[21] This view has been amended by two recent studies of farm women. In Women's Work, Cohen argues for the increased participation of women in the market with the transformation to commercial agriculture and the growth of industry in Ontario. Similarly, in Loosening the Bonds: Mid-Atlantic Farm Women, 1750-1850 (New Haven: 1986), Joan M. Jensen examines the impact of industrialization on farm women in the nineteenth century and demonstrates how the transformation of farms from diversified operations to specialized dairy farms placed women's manufacturing skills in butter-making at the centre of the rural economy. Women's butter-making activity tied them directly to emerging commercial capitalism and to the overall economic development of the region. Jensen found that in the household, the marketplace and the public sphere, mid-Atlantic farm women managed to 'loosen the bonds' of the patriarchal family as they developed new avenues of activity between 1750-1850. Jensen also argues that women in the eighteenth-century household played a crucial role in reproducing the patriarchal family, but within its restrictions they asserted a small measure of 'noncompliance' by reducing their fertility and by spreading their bequests to distant kin and nonkin.

[22] Defined by Barbara Welter in "The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820-1860", American Quarterly (Summer 1966), pp. 151-174.

Whether or not industrialization minimized the social and economic value of farm women[24] or, rather, the value attributed to them[25] is important to determine. In her study of nineteenth-century rural Ontario, Cohen describes the patriarchal control of the family and market using the dairy industry as an example. Cohen argues that in the nineteenth century, Ontario women were displaced as primary producers when industries formerly under their control became a focus of the farm unit.[26] But while it was men who were addressed by business, science and government in their promotion of the new agriculture, women were affected just as greatly. In certain parts of Ontario, women's dairying work continued to be essential until well into the twentieth century, even though contemporary rhetoric indicated otherwise. Like their pioneer predecessors, Ontario farm women continued to be important participants in farm work, especially in marginal farming areas such as Bruce and Grey Counties and in the years when Ontario farmers were facing low prices and labour shortages.

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[23] In her study of New England women in the early nineteenth century, Cott describes how women, realizing their gender-imposed limitations, worked to improve their condition by turning away from men to a separate world and culture. Cott perpetuates the themes of the devaluation of women's work in the marketplace and the division of home and the world. She writes of the enhancement of women's status with the idealization of home and argues that feminist historians fail to recognize the 'cultural halo ringing the significance of home and family' for women in the early national period. Cott's use of separate spheres is useful to describe the lives of the predominantly white, Anglo-Protestant, upper class women she studies but is not adequate, in itself, for a study of farm women. Nancy F. Cott, The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835 (New Haven: 1977).

[24] See Cohen, Women's Work. Marvin McInnis argues that the growing sectors of the agricultural economy were those in which women had less involvement in the years 1851-1891: beef, pork, and dairy production. He contends that Ontario agriculture was becoming less dependent upon female labour. McInnis, "Women, Work and Childbearing", p. 250.

[25] Rankin writes about the diminished value attributed to women's work. She asserts that women's work has become subsumed under the family farm enterprise, hidden by government evaluations biased in favour of single operator definitions. Rankin, "The Politicization of Ontario Farm Women", p. 311.

[26] Cohen also asserts that the separation between the household and productive labour and the strengthening of sexual division of labour, associated with the emergence of industrial capitalism, was not true for nineteenth-century Ontario. She argues that industrialization did not cause women to withdraw from the market; instead it led to an increasing orientation towards the market, first through the sale of surplus household production and then through wage labour. Cohen, Women's Work; chapter four "Farm Women's Labour in Ontario's Staple Exporting Economy, Early to Mid-Nineteenth Century", pp. 59-92.

Cohen's analysis of productive relations contrasts the views held by some women's historians of the supposedly greater egalitarianism of the pre-industrial household.[27] This is a reflection, in part, of the economic focus of her study. In her examination of the exploitive nature of patriarchal productive relations, Cohen recognizes that "in the family economy the issue of power was complicated by the personal relationships of the family"[28] However, this issue is largely unexplored in Cohen's work. An examination of farm women's attitudes towards their role as workers and as members of farm families is essential to an understanding of the experience of farm women.

In her work, Bonds of Community: The Lives of Farm Women in Nineteenth Century New York, Nancy Osterud argues:

> Farm women, whose lives so directly contradicted the prescriptions of separate spheres, rejected the terms of the dominant ideology. They did not retain traditional modes of thought based on hierarchical relations between women and men either, even though inequality was still deeply embedded in women's and men's relationships to the land. Rather, they constructed an alternative vision of

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[27] Although she recognizes that the family economy was based on the mutual dependence of male and female labour, Cohen more generally describes work in the household as based on patriarchal productive relations, paralleling capitalist relations. Cohen presents the inadequacies of patriarchal productive relations for women in her study. She documents the minimal returns women received for their labour through study of wills and demonstrates the extent of male power by describing how decisions regarding capital improvements were almost always intended to reduce men's and not women's labour. Cohen, Women's Work; chapter 2, "Bequests to Daughters in Wills By Males", pp. 14-28; and chapter three, "Division of Labour in a Staple Exporting Economy", pp. 29-58.

[28] Ibid., p. 44.

gender relations based on their experience of kinship and labor.[29]

The use of separate spheres as a model in historical study is under scrutiny. An important criticism of such an approach is that it lends itself to studies of women as separate entities. Their lives are not defined in terms of relationships with others. The paradigm of separate spheres also suggests a universal model of existence for all women and does not encourage analyses of bridging between contemporary ideology and reality.[30] A study of Ontario farm women's work in the period 1870-1910 suggests a need to reevaluate the separate sphere approach to women's history. Their work experiences were determined more by the nature of farming and family relationships than contemporary prescription.

The realities of farm women's lives must not be confused with prevailing public images of women.[31] Advice aimed at farm women was plentiful in this period. Reform rhetoric and prescriptive literature about farm women and their work reflected disparate class identities and separate sphere ideologies and encouraged a standard of womanliness that was contrary to farm women's realities. Farm women found it hard to relate to urban, middle-class reform ideals about woman as "angel in the home." Their responsibilities surpassed those of mother, housekeeper and social reformer. They were farmers, too. Farm women's day-to-day experiences were more significant in defining their work and attitudes about their work than reform ideas about what a farm woman should be like.

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[29] Osterud, Bonds of Community, pp. 278-279. Osterud maintains that farm women in the Nanticoke Valley in New York state used their place on family farms, "...as the basis for constructing an ideal and practice of integration and equality in gender relations to counter the ideology of separate spheres and the reality of male dominance." Ibid., p. 286.

[30] The validity of separate spheres as a tool in the writing of history is examined in Linda K. Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History", The Journal of American History Volume 75, No. 1 (June 1988), pp. 9-39.

[31] In her analysis of frontier women, Myres writes, "Image, myth and stereotype were contrary to what women were actually experiencing and doing." Myres, Westering Women, p. 269.

Clear definition of farm women's work is difficult. While the precepts of male authority and gendered division of labour certainly existed in farm work, women's work was not restricted by convention. Farm life encouraged flexibility and cooperation. In addition, in each case, a woman's work would be defined according to tradition, preference and necessity. What is revealed is that the majority of farm women were responsible at some time for outdoor work and that all farm women were responsible for household maintenance.[32] Mutuality of effort was required of families in all aspects of farming and women were directly involved in the farm enterprise.[33]

In their pioneering work, Women, Work & Family, Louise Tilly and Joan Scott discredit the view that industrialization separated the family and work, isolating one sphere from the other, and argue that women's work has to be assessed in relation to the family.[34] They also document the shared experience of farming for women and men in the family economy, relating the complementary nature of work in rural life.[35]

Martine Segalen's work follows that of Scott and Tilly in outlining the complementary nature of women's and men's work within the farm family. She also argues that nineteenth-century French peasant wives were not as subordinate as folklore, and those who have relied on its depictions, suggest. Rather, Segalen discusses relationships between peasant husbands and wives as characterized by mutual dependence and cooperation.[36] Segalen also contends that nineteenth-century French folklorists did not sufficiently distinguish between their own expectations of what an earthy peasantry should think and do and what such persons actually did and thought. As a result, descriptions of peasant life often reflected the realities of authoritarian bourgeois family life where the wife was expected to be the "unoccupied, even idle, dispenser of love and support".[37]

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[32] Historians often assert that women's work was primarily centred in the farm home but Marvin McInnis points out the problems of too closely defining the work of farm women: "...the line between conventional household chores and contributions to the output of the farm enterprise is a blurred one. Women on Ontario farms had particular responsibility for the kitchen, the garden, the hen house and the dairy." McInnis, "Women, Work and Childbearing", p. 249.

[33] In her study of prairie farm women, Silverman concludes that farm women knew a lot about what their husbands did in their working day. Silverman, "Women's Perceptions of Marriage", p. 58. The separation of men and women's work was rare: "Many more of them indicated instead that they watched quite carefully the work their husbands did and inquired after it often, prepared to help out and sometimes take it over entirely." Silverman, The Last Best West, p. 99.

[34] Louise A. Tilly, and Joan W. Scott, Women, Work, and Family (New York: 1978), p. 232.

[35] Ibid., p. 47.

In a study of women in the southern United States, D. Harland Hagler recognizes the great differences between the ideal woman as presented by upper and middle-class society and the farm woman ideal developed by antebellum farm society, in particular, the agricultural press. In response to the cult of the lady which emerged in the 1830's, agriculturalists in the South presented their own views of what a farm woman should aspire to, modifying most aspects of the lady ideal and launching sweeping criticisms on the "presumed conduct of ladies".[38] This study recognizes the importance of class as a determinant of values.

Farm women could not identify with the stereotypes of the middle class. Their lives were more defined by their families and farming than by popular standards of behaviour.[39] The need to identify farm women within the context of family[40] and class is emerging as a theme in the historiography of farm women.

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[36] The central thesis of Segalen's work is that the relationship between husband and wife in rural peasant society was based "not on the absolute authority of one over the other, but on the complementarity of the two". Martine Segalen, Love and Power in the Peasant Family: Rural France in the Nineteenth Century (Oxford: 1983), p. 9.

[37] Ibid., p. ix.

[38] D. Harland Hagler, "The Ideal Woman in the Antebellum South: Lady or Farmwife?", The Journal of Southern History Volume XLVI, No. 3 (August 1980), pp. 405-418.

[39] See Mary Neth, "Preserving the Family Farm: Farm Families and Communities in the Midwest, 1900-1940" PhD Thesis, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1987., and Silverman, "Women's Perceptions of Marriage", p. 51. Both argue for the clear distinction between middle-class culture and farming life. Silverman writes: "Frontier farm women defined themselves as working class, perhaps not economically but culturally and psychologically." Ibid., p. 52.

Urban middle-class ideas underpinned many contemporary representations and ideas regarding the lives of farm women. As well, ideas about farm women's lives reflected the goals of reformers seeking to revitalize and maintain a rural way of life. In her thesis, Mary Neth describes the maintenance of customs of gender integration in the American midwest despite pressures from the agricultural establishment. Neth recognizes how the ideology of rural reformers expressed class-based, social definitions of appropriate men's and women's work. She describes the contradictory nature of these rural reform ideas to the realities of farm relations and work:

> The articulation of gender-appropriate work roles for farm men and women had political, economic and social importance for the goals of the agricultural establishment. They promoted a separation of male work and female work which connected farm men to the world of business and confined farm women to the home. This separation ignored the economic contribution of farm women's saving strategies and disconnected the work of farm men from their family and community context....The separation of men's and women's farm work, accompanied by a devaluation of the latter, enabled the agricultural establishment to, at best, ignore the necessity for, and at worst to directly undermine, many family survival strategies such as 'making do', work flexibility and home production.[41]

In her work, Neth continues the theme of mutuality in rural life. She identifies the basic division of labour on farms, but locates this division within family farm values of mutual dependence and support. Neth describes work traditions of men and women on family farms that connected rather than divided their labours. The realities of family farm life contradicted images of gender-appropriate work espoused by rural reformers.

These images mirrored disparate values and status. Rural reformers were not only of the urban middle class, they also represented the rural elite. Rural residents were not all farmers. Many were residents of towns and villages and enjoyed a lifestyle distinct

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[40] Barbara J. Cooper, "Farm Women: Some Contemporary Themes", Labour/Le Travail Volume 24 (Fall 1989), p. 169.

[41] Neth, "Preserving the Family Farm", pp. 469-70.

from their farming counterparts. Distinguishing between farm interests and the rural elite is very important.[42] Rankin argues for the primacy of class over gender in the politicization of Ontario farm women:

> Rural residents of both sexes have historically identified themselves a 'class' distinct from the urban class whom they accuse of lacking sufficient appreciation of the contributions of the farm population.[43]

Farm men and women certainly extended their feelings of distinction from their urban counterparts to the residents of the towns and villages of rural Ontario. Studies of farm women require an appreciation of the important differences between rural farm women and non-farm women and the effects of social class.[44] The farm women in this study defined their work experiences more by class than gender.

Contemporary literature about farm women often reflected the attitudes of non-farm society. Especially expressive in this regard were rural reformers, with their particular ideas about family, health, education and women's role. The majority of rural reformers belonged to the rural elite. The reform initiatives they presented reflected the values and experiences of a dissimilar lifestyle. While attempting to preserve and maintain a rural way of life, reformers endeavoured to make it more like their own. Therefore, although celebrating the hard work and cooperative effort that defined farm life, reformers also deplored women's heavy burden, promoted women's independent efforts, and encouraged a strict separation between work and home. Sources such as rural newspapers and Women's Institutes[45] promise revealing glimpses into the lives of farm women. These sources were especially valuable in their definitions of what they believed a farm woman should be, although they also reveal farm women's actual experiences.

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[42] This is recognized by Griffiths in her study of women in both rural and urban centres. Griffiths echoes Turner's thesis when she argues that established codes of behaviour that restricted women's behaviour were less effective in the country because of the nature of life there. She sees this autonomy restricted with the growth of larger centres: "As the community established formal institutions for the organization of life, the explicit exclusion of women from direct influence in certain areas becomes more and more burdensome....It is in the towns that one can discover the roots of a class structure....In these circumstances one can begin to trace the impact of a much more rigid image of the proper social behaviour for women." See Griffiths, Penelope's Web, p. 143.

[43] Rankin, "The Politicization of Ontario Farm Women", p. 312.

[44] This theme is found in Cooper, "Farm Women: Some Contemporary Themes", p. 168. The use of class in a determination of women's goals has been questioned by Veronica Strong-Boag who sees, "...a recurring tendency on the part of historians to see female activists as differing in little more than gender from male activists of the same economic class." In "Pulling in Double Harness or Hauling a Double Load: Women, Work and Feminism on the Canadian Prairie", Journal of Canadian Studies Volume 21, No. 2 (Summer, 1986), p. 34.

The rural press and Women's Institutes were outspoken advocates of rural reform. The rural press concentrated on farm women's education in such areas of work as poultry-raising, dairy work, vegetable and fruit growing and financial management. Women's Institutes were founded by domestic reformers and the Ontario government for the purpose of improving farm women's homemaking and mothering skills.[46] Instruction of farm women in domestic duties such as cooking, sewing, and health care was pursued. Reform literature from these sources which focused on farm women and their work encouraged a standard of womanliness that was contrary to farm women's realities. This study reveals that farm women found it hard to relate to the programmes of the Women's Institutes, a "farm women's" organization. In its early years, the Institutes reflected more the interests of the rural elite than farm women.

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[45] Although the United Farm Women of Ontario, like the Women's Institutes, are commonly seen to represent Ontario farm women, they, too, must be understood, as all reform organizations of this period, in light of the membership and its particular agendas. As well as espousing economic and political change, the UFWO also encouraged a definitive place for women in rural society. Asserting that the overwork of women resulted in isolation as well as the crippling of mind, body and spirit, the UFWO encouraged motherhood and women's familial role as women's most important calling. According to this organization, rural women's most essential productive role: "...was to keep the men fed and their clothes mended and to guard the health of subsequent generations." The concerns of the UFWO mirrored those of other rural reformers. The UFWO blamed urban domination for rural Ontario's conditions but more so rural society itself. Farm women were criticized for their passive acceptance of backward conditions and rural men for their failure to effect political power to improve rural social conditions, for amassing labour-saving devices at the expense of farm homes, and for treating wives as little more than farm equipment necessary for farming. Margaret Kechnie, "The United Farm Women of Ontario: Developing a Political Consciousness", Ontario History, Volume LXXVII, No. 4. (December 1985), p. 271.

[46] Because they were sponsored by provincial governments, the extent to which the Institutes represented farm women has been questioned. See Carol L. Bacchi, Liberation Deferred? The Ideas of the English-Canadian Suffragists, 1877-1918 (Toronto: 1983), pp. 124-131, and Rankin, "The Politicization of Farm Women", pp. 313-318. This debate has particularly centred on whether the UFWO or Women's Institutes better represented the views of Ontario farm women. For a positive assessment of the Institutes over the UFWO see Kechnie, "The United Farm Women of Ontario", p. 274.

Women's essential role in successful farming was increasingly recognized by reformers seeking to improve farm life in Ontario. The value of women's work on the farm was complicated, however, by contradictions in reform rhetoric. Farm women's involvement in farm work and business was antithetical to contemporary reformers' ideas of women's role in society. Reformers saw women's place in society as one characterized by motherhood and domesticity. As a result, farm women faced an abundance of demanding and contradictory contemporary comment. Accounts complimenting their productive, earning capabilities existed alongside denials of its existence. Commentary urged them to be better housekeepers and mothers while other rhetoric expected them to be more scientific and productive in their 'farm' work. Women's farm work was valued by reformers who sought the maintenance of their essential role in farming but devalued by those who concentrated on improving the domestic portion of their work, and by those who depreciated their "farm" work. And, while contemporary rural reformers encouraged the view of a farm woman's life as healthy, happy and fulfilling[47], in order to discourage rural outmigration, so too did they advance the opinion that farm women were labouring drudges[48], to encourage farm home improvement.

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[47] There are numerous examples of contemporary articles boosting farm life. In October 1913 an article published in ***Farm and Dairy*** entitled "In Praise of the Farm" extolled rural life for its closeness to nature, its beauty, quiet and healthy atmosphere, as well as it's special appeal for women and their children. ***Farm and Dairy and Rural Home***, October 9, 1913, p. 2. Another article entitled "Our Country Women" favourably compared life on the farm for women over life for women in the city. The article asserted that health, happiness and morality were gained from the pure air and sunshine of the country. ***Farm and Dairy and Rural Home***, April 10, 1913, p. 32. See also John MacDougall, Rural Life in Canada: its Trend and Tasks (Toronto: 1913, reprinted Toronto, 1973).

Reform rhetoric in the period 1890-1914 often presented farm women as meek, labouring drudges. It also suggested that farm women occupied a well-defined, domestic sphere of work and that leisure and luxuries were farm women's first priorities. These images reflected negative representations of farm women as unwilling adjuncts to men. Reform rhetoric supported the opinion that farm women were displaced from their traditional fields of labour and presented a picture of farm life where the farm house was separate and unrelated to the rest of the farm enterprise. It resulted in depictions of farm life that are contrary to the cooperative effort and hard work that characterized family farming in this period. In areas such as Bruce and Grey Counties, labour shortages and marginal farming meant that women's work was crucial to the success of the farm.

Glimpses of the realities of farm women's lives are revealed by inconsistencies in the rhetoric produced by rural reformers. Occasionally, too, amid the clamouring of prescriptive literature, one hears the voices of farm women relating their own ideas and experiences. What emerges is a picture of farm women who were occupied with both household and farm work, women who had little time for leisure and who often went without luxuries. Farm women in this period expressed little interest in Women's Institutes and maternal feminist goals. They might have more often been found at meetings of the Farmer's Institutes. When they found time to contribute to contemporary discussion about farming, they could not agree with images of themselves merely as homemakers. Their views were shaped by class rather than gender. They thought of themselves as farmers at heart:

> The mother who confines herself exclusively to domestic affairs indoors, unable to tell a passing caller on what part of the farm her husband is engaged, or what work is going forward, may be an excellent housekeeper, but she will fail in bringing out the best possibilities of her children's nature, or in making them

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[48] An article "He Waited Too Long" characterizes the story of many a farm woman's life as a tragedy of small things. The article concludes that, in most cases, the root of the trouble is the selfishness of the husband who will not install modern improvements in his home. In ***Farm and Dairy and Rural Home***, May 16, 1912, p. 19.

> farmers at heart. With all our labour saving machinery, there is still work for all. Nowhere is co-operation more necessary than in a farmer's family. Avoid as far as possible that drain on a farm, hired help....The thrifty days of our grandmothers are not past. I know a family of farmers daughters who can harness their horses, and while one drives the reaper, others bind up the grain, draw it in, etc., attend the pigs, calves, bees, vegetable garden, spin and manufacture the wool, etc., and these girls are no ignorant rustics either.[49]

Contemporary sources therefore presented diverse images of farm women's work according to their various agendas. Farm women were depicted variously as leisurely homemakers, drudges, field workers and valuable, hard-working members of farm enterprises. Those, like the leaders of the Women's Institutes, who perceived farm women's disadvantaged state often relied upon prescriptive ideas about what a woman should be like. Yet farm women also found it difficult to relate the images found in farm journals in this period. Pursuing their various agendas, rural reformers revealed as much as they distorted farm women's work. While the literature downplayed women's important economic contributions, it also revealed that farm women were essential to the success of farming and that their work surpassed the household sphere.

Mixed farming and difficult economic times ensured that Ontario farm women's work was highlighted in this period. Farm women's own observations of their work contrasted with the images found elsewhere. Farm women considered themselves as a part of the family farm unit where cooperation and hard work were essential to its success. They could not identify with the separation of work by gender promoted by the rural elite. Farm women's work experiences reflected farm values. Class, not gender, was more important in defining farm women's ideas about their work.

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[49] "Women as Farmers" a prize essay by Mrs. Robert Warwick, Wingham, Ontario, featured by ***The Farmer's Advocate***, November 1884., p. 332.

WOMEN'S INSTITUTES AND THE IDEAL OF DOMESTICITY

Ideas about women's special role, both as mothers and wives, abounded in rural reform rhetoric. The concept of "separate spheres" was an important ideological influence upon women in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This era, marked by new opportunities for leisure, employment and education, affirmed ideas about woman's proper sphere. Perceived challenges to woman's traditional position in the home as a result of new forms of knowledge and changing methods of production, as well as concerns about the deterioration of family and health that urbanization wrought, resulted in an emphasis on woman's special role and her proper sphere. The qualities of moral judgement, delicate sensibility and maternal love were encouraged. With the advent of progressivism, a model of educated motherhood replaced the earlier emphasis on maternal virtues and instincts; the focus was on the needs of the child and the necessity of being prepared for the role of motherhood.[1]

Characterizations of the home as the definitive sphere of a woman's life were more appropriate to the urban middle classes and the rural elite than farm women.[2] The idea of woman as an angel in the home was incompatible with farm women's realities, and added to expectations placed upon her. Instead of legitimizing women's changing role in times of urbanization and industrialization, as it was meant to do for urban, middle-class women, the idea of separate spheres was perhaps seen as a means to compensate Ontario farm women, to assure them of a unique and special function in what was seen by reformers as an otherwise demanding and minimally rewarding role. More definitely, women reformers sought to legitimize maternal feminist goals[3] by proclaiming them duties of all Canadian women.[4]

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[1] Sheila M. Rothman, Woman's Proper Place: A History of Changing Ideals and Practices, 1870 to the Present (New York: 1978); see especially chapter one. Being a good mother meant being educated in one's work: "It is worthy of note that, according to statistics, 82 per cent. of the women of America do their own work, which is a very complicated business. A woman is not merely a bread maker, but she has to have a knowledge of so many things. She has to teach her children theology. She has at times to be doctor and nurse, cook, baker, paper-hanger, decorator, dairy maid, butter maker and mistress of all the other trades and professions that are necessary in a comfortable home. Here is where our Institutes of Domestic Science come to our aid." "The Report of the Women's Institutes", Sessional Paper No. 24 Sessional Papers, 1907., p. 124.

[2] Or working women: "The middle class initially embraced the idea of home economics more readily than did the working class. Domestic ideology had greater appeal among women who did not have to work for a living but who feared that their status within the home and family was being seriously eroded. Middle-class men often joined them in common cause in order to reinforce the accepted sexual division of labour which the nineteenth century was about to impart on the twentieth." Terry Crowley, "Madonnas Before Magdalenes: Adelaide Hoodless and the Making of the Canadian Gibson Girl" The Canadian Historical Review Volume LXVII, No. 4 (December 1986), p. 521.

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[3] The term "maternal feminism" has proven very useful in describing middle-class women's reform efforts in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Maternal feminism is associated with the activism of middle-class women based on the contemporary assumption of fundamental differences between men and women, where the moral superiority of woman was assumed.

Three stages of scholarship on first-wave feminism have been defined by Strong-Boag. Pioneering historians depicted suffragists as heroines who organized lobby campaigns and overcame the prejudices of their day to win the vote. The next stage of historical interpretation depicted suffragism "as a superficial reform based on an inadequate analysis of the economic and social order" or depicted suffragists "as middle-class reformers seeking the vote so as to impose social controls on immigrants and the working class." Both interpretations "pointed out that these first-wave feminists tended to see their maternal role as the justification for their empowerment, not questioning women's 'natural' responsibility for home maintenance and childcare." The third stage sees women's demand for suffrage as potentially radical: "offering...the unconventional prospect of women seeking a direct connection with the state rather than allowing male family members to act as mediators for them." Veronica Strong-Boag "Ever a Crusader: Nellie McClung, First-Wave Feminist", in Veronica Strong-Boag and Anita Clair Fellman, eds. Rethinking Canada: The Promise of Women's History (Toronto: 1986), p. 178., cited in Randi Warne, Literature as Pulpit: The Christian Social Activism of Nellie L. McClung (Waterloo: 1993), p. 177. (Warne locates her work with this last stage of scholarship, though she gives "greater weight to attempts by McClung and others to make the public sphere accountable to women's experiences." Ibid.)

In her recent work, Randi Warne rejects the term "maternal feminist" to describe a prominent reformer, Nellie McClung, in favour of the term "material feminist." Maternal feminism is defined as the projection of a "sentimentalized, bourgeois notion of Victorian 'true womanhood' upon the public sphere". Warne sees this definition as limiting. She prefers to describe McClung as a woman who "defined women's control over women's sphere as women's control over the reproduction of society." Warne relates: "Most feminists wished to increase women's rights in the home and simultaneously bring homelike nurturing into public life." Feminists sought control over things like property, child custody, and temperance with the object that "women's sphere must be defined by women." Ibid., pp. 148-149.

The idea of separate spheres implied that farm women's whole influence was centred, and belonged, in the home. It also implied a separation of home and work. Both concepts were foreign to the realities of farm life in which the connectedness of home and farm were important. Although a basic division of labour could be found on farms, there was a sharing and cooperation of work effort. The articulation of gendered roles for farm men and women by rural reformers promoted a separation of male work and female work which associated farm men with the world of business and linked farm women to the home. Farming and family, business and home were linked closely in rural Ontario, a reality at odds with the separation of work and home, family and business promoted by reformers.[5]

Women's productive farm work was discouraged by contemporary reform rhetoric that emphasized women's domestic and mothering roles. The preoccupation with woman's duties as mother and housewife reflected domestic reform agendas.[6] The idea of separate spheres was most clearly articulated in rural Ontario by the Women's Institutes. Organizations such as the Women's Institutes were dominated by women who had the education, interest, and most important, the time to involve themselves in social issues. Their household labours were lightened by domestic servants and by economic developments which removed traditional work from the home.[7] In response to a perceived deterioration of their importance in the household[8], women in the rural elite organized for reform. Women were to be trained in their household duties to allow more time for their families and for extending their domestic duties outside of the home in charitable and reform causes. Expectations thus placed upon farm women were quite demanding. The majority of farm homes did not enjoy household help or technological advances. Very few farm houses had running water in this period. In addition, farm women were engaged in work outside of the domestic sphere, making increasing domestic expectations unrealistic. One contemporary farm woman remarked:

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[4] The rural women's reform movement was cast in an Anglo-Protestant mould. Non-English or "new Canadians" were portrayed as a group requiring social services or Canadianization rather than as part of a cooperative movement for rural reform. There were also few new "rural" Ontarians to reform in this period. The majority of immigrants who came to Canada did not come to farm -- from 1904-1914 only 28 per cent of overseas migrants said they were coming to farm -- and those who did come to farm did not usually stay in Ontario. In 1921, 87 per cent of the Ontario population was Canadian-born. Robert Bothwell, Ian Drummond, John English, Canada, 1900-1945 (Toronto: 1987), p. 61.

[5] In her thesis Neth describes the maintenance of customs of gender integration in the American midwest despite pressures from the "agricultural establishment." She recognizes how the ideology of rural reformers expressed class-based, social definitions of appropriate men's and women's work. Mary Neth, "Preserving the Family Farm: Farm Families and Communities in the Midwest, 1900-1940", PhD Thesis, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1987., pp. 469-470.

[6] While recognizing the dangers of too liberally defining a reform movement, the term maternal feminism will be used in this study to describe the efforts of the Women's Institutes and other sources of prescriptive literature aimed at addressing farm women's domestic duties in this period. Material feminism and maternal feminism both define reform ideologies based on gender. Both are based on the premise that the public

> For a farmer's wife, life is more exacting as far as work goes, than for a woman of about the same rank in town. The farmer's wife cannot depend to the same extent upon 'the butcher, the baker, the candle-stick maker' as can the town woman. Help is also harder to get in the country....[9]

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sphere become accessible to women's experience. The majority of those who were involved in the domestic reform movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were middle-class women, whether their more appropriate designations are material or maternal feminists. And, whatever the ultimate aim of feminism in this period, their reform rhetoric was antithetical to farm women's experiences. Farm women defined their work experiences more by their condition as farmers than by their gender. They had their own ideas about their work. Farm women could not relate to the goals of domestic reformers because they did not mirror farm realities.

[7] The maternal feminist goals of the Women's Institutes are outlined by Shelley Bosetti in "The Rural Women's University: Women's Institutes in Alberta from 1909 to 1940", M.Ed., The University of Alberta, 1983. See especially chapter three.

[8] Diane Pederson, "'The Scientific Training of Mothers': The Campaign for Domestic Science in Ontario Schools, 1890-1913", in Richard A. Jarrell and Arnold E. Roos, eds. Critical Issues in the History of Canadian Science, Technology and Medicine, Second Conference on the History of Canadian Science, Technology and Medicine, Kingston, Ontario, 1981. (Thornhill: 1983), p. 178.

[9] Mrs. T. H. Bass, "The Woman on the Farm", ***The O.A.C. Review***, 1912., p. 560.

The Women's Institutes of Ontario were a primary source of domestic reform initiatives aimed at farm women. The first Women's Institute was formed in Wentworth County in 1897 under the leadership of Mr. Erland Lee, Secretary of the local Farmers' Institute. Lee enlisted the support of domestic science crusader Mrs. Adelaide Hunter Hoodless. Through their efforts, Women's Institutes came to be affiliated with the Farmers' Institutes and with the provincial government which provided financial support.[10] The Ontario government recruited several organizers who came to be influential in the establishment of Women's Institutes throughout the province.[11] Pioneer leaders of the Institute, including such prominent individuals as Mrs. E. D. Smith, Mrs. Erland Lee, Mrs. Carpenter and Mrs. McNeilly, were important spokespersons for Women's Institutes. They often visited Farmers' Institute meetings at which farm women were present, "...preaching the gospel of the Women's Institute,...encouraging the formation of new branches."[12] They also published many articles relating to Women's Institute work in the rural press.[13] The early organizers of Women's Institutes were from the rural elite and presented a progressive-minded program. They were more closely linked to reform than farm interests. In arguing for the establishment of Women's Institutes, one of the founders reveals this perspective:

> In no section of a community are progressive ideas more difficult to develop than in the remote rural districts. This is easily understood when the circumstances under which they live are compared with the advantages provided in the more

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[10] On both Hoodless' and Lee's influence see Annie Walker, Edith M. Collins, M. McIntyre Hood, Fifty Years of Achievement, (Toronto: 1948); see especially chapter one. See also Cheryl MacDonald, Adelaide Hoodless: Domestic Crusader (Toronto: 1986) and Terry Crowley, "Madonnas Before Magdalenes: Adelaide Hoodless and the Making of the Canadian Gibson Girl" The Canadian Historical Review Volume LXVII, No. 4 (December 1986), pp. 520-547.

[11] In chronicling the development of Women's Institutes, the authors of Fifty Years of Achievement remark: "Much of the credit for this ...development rightly belongs to the Government organizers, Miss Laura Rose, Miss Blanche Maddock, Mrs. A. Kinney, Mrs. J. L. Smith and Miss A. Hollingsworth." Walker, Collins, Hood, Fifty Years of Achievement, p. 12.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid., p. 9.

> densely populated places. Not having opportunities for seeing the result of new methods, and living such monotonous, tread-mill lives, the mental energies become stultified and the receptive faculties benumbed.[14]

The Women's Institutes' association with urban, progressive, middle class reformers is further revealed by its affiliation with the National Council of Women. This affiliation occurred in the second year of the Institutes' formation in 1898 and came about largely through the efforts of Hoodless.[15]

"Women's work and domestic happiness, and efforts tending to a more intelligent performance of these duties" were the stated subjects of interest of the first Women's Institute.[16] The objectives of Women's Institutes were further delineated in the 1901 Report of the Farmers' Institutes:

> The dissemination of knowledge relating to domestic economy, including household architecture, with special attention to home sanitation; a better understanding of the economic and hygienic value of foods, clothing and fuels, and a more scientific care and training of children, with a view to raising the general standard of the health and morals of our people.[17]

The emphasis on domestic work can be attributed to the interests of Hoodless, an enthusiastic advocate of domestic science education.[18] At the first Women's Institute meeting in 1897, speakers included Mrs. Rorer of Philadelphia, domestic science editor of the Ladies Home Journal, and Miss Watson, Principal of the Hamilton School of Domestic Science. In the same year the Institute established six areas of interest: domestic economy; architecture, with a special reference to heat, light, sanitation, and ventilation; health, including physiology, hygiene, calisthenics and medicine; floriculture and horticulture; music and art; literature, education, sociology, and legislation.[19]

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[14] Adelaide Hoodless, 'Organization in the Rural Districts' "Report of the Farmers' Institutes", Sessional Paper No. 26 Sessional Papers, 1898, p. 261.

[15] 'Report of the Saltfleet Women's Institute' in "Report of the Farmers' Institutes", Sessional Paper No. 29 Sessional Papers, 1899., p. 16. Evidence of the continuing connection between the National Council of Women (NCW) and the Women's Institutes is revealed by their continuing correspondence. NCW reports were sent to each Institute, and Women's Institutes participated in NCW annual conferences. See Mrs. F. E. Webster, 'Methods to Secure the Active Assistance of Members', "Report of the Women's Institutes", Sessional Paper No. 24 Sessional Papers, 1906, p. 66. See also reports of the annual meetings of the National Council of Women and Veronica Strong-Boag "The Parliament of Women: The National Council of Women of Canada, 1893-1929" National Museum of Man Mercury Series, Paper No. 18, (Ottawa: 1976).

[16] Hoodless, 'A Step in the Right Direction: The Saltfleet Women's Institute', "Report of the Farmers' Institutes", Sessional Paper No. 26 Sessional Papers, 1898, p. xxii.

[17] "Report of the Farmers' Institutes", Sessional Paper No. 25 Sessional Papers, 1902., p. 7.

Women's Institutes were also concerned with rural decline, as well as rural education.[20] Concern about rural depopulation induced the promotion of values and scenarios unfamiliar to farm society. Farm beautification, leisure and luxury were championed by reformers as the means to stem the tide of rural depopulation. The freedom for women to purchase whatever they wanted was not only difficult in a farm economy, but such independence of action was antithetical to the mutuality that characterized farm life.[21] Yet, farm women were encouraged to purchase luxury items for themselves and frequently urged to use farm revenue to decorate farm homes:

> The girls will show you how the household expenses including carpets for the floors, pictures for the walls, curtains for the windows, an organ or piano for the parlor, etc., can be procured with the produce of the hens and small fruits that they will care for, providing they be allowed to apply the results obtained in thus beautifying their homes.[22]

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[18] Hoodless, 'A Step in the Right Direction', "Report of the Farmers' Institutes", Sessional Paper No. 26 Sessional Papers, 1898, p. xxii. See also MacDonald, Adelaide Hoodless: Domestic Crusader.

[19] Walker, Collins, Hood, Fifty Years of Achievement, p. 6.

[20] Hoodless, 'Organization in the Rural Districts', "Report of the Farmers' Institutes", Sessional Paper No. 26 Sessional Papers, 1898., p. 262.

[21] One contemporary went as far as to argue that "...there is nothing whatever to hinder women from competing with the sterner sex", contradicting the cooperative effort that characterized farming in this period. "Gardening as a Profession for Women", ***Farm and Dairy and Rural Home***, October 5, 1911., p. 4.

[22] 'Enlarging the Farm', "The Report of the Farmers' Institutes", Sessional Paper No. 26 Sessional Papers, 1898., pp. 48-49.

When running water was a luxury in most farm homes, the impression that farm women aspired above all else to purchase curtains seems incongruous.[23]

The divergent interests of the maternal feminists and the farm women they claimed to represent are further revealed by the following scenario. In 1911 the Northumberland County Women's Institute purchased a vacuum cleaner for $25.[24] The purchase price of this vacuum cleaner would have been prohibitive for farm families. In the same period twenty-five dollars represented the monthly wages of a farm hand[25] and four tons of straw sold for only twenty-eight dollars.[26] The relatively late date of this purchase and the attention the Institute made of it revealed the extent to which a vacuum was new and unknown in rural areas. Still, the President of the Institute, Mrs. S. L. Terrill, promoted the machine: "My advice to any and all is to make an endeavor to purchase a vacuum cleaner."[27]

The majority of Ontario farm homes did not have electricity until after World War II.[28] The accessibility of the machine to farm women was further reduced by the fact that the vacuum cleaner was kept in a village at one member's home, and that members were charged fifty cents a day to rent it. A farm woman would not only have had to travel a distance to secure the machine, but would be further inconvenienced by having to return it immediately to avoid a two-day rental fee.[29] Luxury items were not a priority of farm women. When prompted by reformers, farm women expressed interest in the most basic of modern conveniences, including running water, indoor plumbing and cupboards. Their expectations were quite different from reformers who advocated such things as vacuum cleaners.

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[23] The muted response of farm women to household technologies was recognized and the reasons explored. The opposition of their peers was seen as a reason for farm women's reluctance to employ household technologies: "If there is but one person in the house to do the housekeeping, then to make the machinery go smoothly, and to secure some leisure, the rest and recreation must be the result obtained through good machinery and intelligent operation. The housekeeper must be free from the domination of things. She must sometimes blaze a trail in methods in spite of the opposition of friends, and the ridicule of neighbours." ***Farm and Dairy and Rural Home***, October 5, 1911, p. 5.

[24] "Vacuum Cleaner Owned By an Institute", Ibid., p. 7.

[25] ***Farm and Dairy and Rural Home***, October 19, 1911, p. 18.

[26] ***Farm and Dairy and Rural Home***, January 9, 1913, p. 5.

[27] "Vacuum Cleaner Owned By an Institute", ***Farm and Dairy and Rural Home***, October 5, 1911, p. 7.

[28] Keith Robson Fleming, Power At Cost: Ontario Hydro and Rural Electrification, 1911-1958 (Montreal: 1992), p. 248. Fleming identifies the pronounced difference between urban and rural living standards in Ontario in this period. The percentage of farms with electricity ranged from 40-50 per cent in Bruce County and 30-40 per cent in

The greatest discrepancies between farm reform rhetoric and the realities of farming occurred in discussions of farm women's work. That rural Ontario women found it difficult to meet the expectations promoted by advocates of domestic science, new child rearing methods, education and rural life improvement is evidenced by the repeated calls for these women to "make more time" and to "budget their time more effectively". Although labour-saving devices were seen as one means to improve matters, reformers also urged increased cooperation, better timing and work methods. One article was bemused by the apparent heavy load of work that contemporary farm women were faced with:

> Are the hours just as long as they used to be in the days of our grandmother, when the soap, the sugar, the candles, the yarn, the flannel and the cloth were all of home manufacture, while the knitted counterpanes and very much quilted quilts, now handed down as monuments of industry, denote that even some leisure hours were left for lighter work? It does seem in this age of ceaseless

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Grey County as late as 1948. Ibid., p. xiii. In an article printed in 1913, entitled "Changed Conditions In Ontario Farming", evidence of the absence of electricity on farms is clearly documented. The author enthusiastically chronicled the setting up of exhibits by the Ontario Hydro-electric Power Commission to demonstrate the use of power on farms. A few exceptional cases of farms using power were noted, the writer concluding, "Who can prophesy what is to be the end of this movement?" ***The Owen Sound Sun***, January 7, 1913, p. 3.

[29] In the newspaper issue that related the Institute's new possession, a driver was advertised for $130. This was perhaps a much more desirable and practical purchase for contemporary farm women who found it difficult to get from place to place in the countryside. ***Farm and Dairy and Rural Home***, October 5, 1911, p. 24.

> activity that to accomplish but a part of what one would like to do, it is often necessary 'to make the night joint labourer with the day'. The cry on all sides seems to be 'I haven't any time, I'm so busy'. Surely something must be wrong, and if wrong, then surely there is some remedy; and it likely lies in the saying 'plainer living and higher thinking'.[30]

The dichotomy between the expectations of the maternal feminists and the realities of life for farm women was further revealed in a comment by a domestic reformer. It presented both what was expected and to be desired by farm women: a concentration on domestic responsibilities, leisure and intellectual pursuits, and also what the reality meant: "a harder class of work" than those "occupations" in which the above expectations were common:

> Amid the clamour of the new-fangled call for new chances for the New Woman one can still hear the unspoken cry of half-nourished bodies asking for better equipment on the part of the women in the discharge of the duty laid upon them in our form of civilization. This is a much harder class of work to do than those occupations which are termed fashionable and genteel; but, because it is hard to do, it is best worth doing well. It is as much harder to do, as it is harder and nobler to serve well than to shine well; and while the claims of social life, intellectual activities, financial management, domestic duties and artistic tastes become increasingly great, it is unpardonable that the hand of the nourisher of tho [sic] people should become careless at that task.[31]

The incompatibility of this ideal and farm women's realities was often ignored, and if acknowledged, it was to warrant improvement both for and on the part of farm women. It was argued that farm women could perform their homemaking duties better if they had help, from their family and from labour-saving devices.[32] In addition, farm women could be better mothers and wives if they adopted new work skills and performed their work more efficiently. By promoting improved working methods and help for farm women, reformers were acknowledging farm women's already heavy burden of work. Cognizant that women's 'farm' labour served as an impediment to the desired focus on domestic duties, when domestic reformers did recognize it, it was usually to suggest how they could improve this aspect of farm women's work so that they might devote more time to housekeeping and mothering.

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[30] Miss Laura Rose, 'Economic Housekeeping', "The Report of the Farmers' Institutes", Sessional Paper No. 26 Sessional Papers, 1898, p. 270. The author's remedies included education, plainer cooking, better planning, and better conveniences. She also urged farm self-sufficiency.

[31] 'The Woman's Right', "Annual Reports of the Butter and Cheese Associations", Sessional Paper No. 24 Sessional Papers, 1897., pp. 20-21.

[32] Farm women were repeatedly urged to seek improved household technologies in their homes. They were encouraged to "persuade", "insist", "pretend it's a reality", to lobby on their own behalf. See "A Talk With Country Women", ***Farm and Dairy and Rural Home***, December 14, 1911, p. 14. Indoor plumbing was the improvement most lobbied

The domestic focus of the Women's Institutes was set out clearly by one of its organizers:

> Since, then, the home and the care of it is woman's proper sphere, it is right and necessary that she should be fitted by education for doing so in the best possible manner.[33]

Gradually, the Institutes did come to reflect the concerns of the average Ontario farm women as the organization began to spread at a grass roots level. The agendas of meetings, and topics of presentations began to reflect their interests. Art as a topic of discussion was replaced by "How To Increase Dairy Profits".[34] As late as 1910, however, the rural elite dominated the organization and its discussions of farm women's lives.

Farm women formed a small proportion of early Women's Institute participants. For example, in the 1903 reports of the Institutes for the counties of Bruce and Grey,

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for: "How many of you are asking for water taps in the kitchen, and how many are still carrying hard and soft water from the barn? Determine to have these labor saving devices and you can get them, because it is a well known fact that, when a woman makes up her mind that she is going to have a thing, in nine cases out of ten she gets it." Miss M. Watson, (from the MacDonald Institute, Guelph), 'Labor Saving Devices', "Report of the Women's Institutes", Sessional Paper No. 24 Sessional Papers, 1907., p. 31.

[33] Mrs. D. McTavish, 'The Education of Our Daughters', "Report of the Women's Institutes" Sessional Paper No. 24 Sessional Papers, 1907, p. 108.

[34] "Women's Institute Lectures", Sessional Papers, 1909., p. 19.

membership totalled 265 and 408, respectively.[35] Although census statistics do not record the number of farm women, as distinct from rural women, in these years, in 1901 Bruce County claimed 6,685 farm owners.[36] Therefore 265 Women's Institute members represented a very small proportion of potential farm women members -- less than 4 per cent.[37] In Grey, with a population of farm owners of approximately 15,500, 408 was only about 3 per cent.[38] These figures also do not account for the number of townswomen who were members of the Women's Institute.

Townswomen accounted for a large proportion of Women's Institute members, especially before 1910. Farm women were seen as a distinct class from townswomen: "This is an association which bring together ruralites and townspeople, and the meetings have a tendency to unite, socially, these two classes."[39] An examination of the officer rolls for the Women's Institutes of Bruce County from 1902-1915 reveals a high proportion of women who were prominent members of local towns and villages. These women's participation in organizations such as the Women's Institutes was mirrored by the community involvement of their husbands, who were businessmen as well as church and political leaders. Status and comfortable living allowed the rural elite to become involved in rural reform efforts. Officers of the Centre Bruce Women's Institutes included Mrs. Isaiah S. Shoemaker as President. Isaiah Shoemaker was in business in Paisley for over sixty years as a jeweller. He was also warden of Bruce County in 1911 and reeve of

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[35] "The Report of the Farmers' Institute", Sessional Paper No. 25 Sessional Papers, 1904, pp. 48-49.

[36] Fourth Census of Canada, 1901 Volume 2 (1904), p. 3.

[37] Even an estimated increase of farm owners to 7,000 in 1903 still results in the same estimation of less than 4 per cent.

[38] "The Report of the Farmers' Institute", Sessional Paper No. 25 Sessional Papers, 1904, pp. 52-53. See also Fourth Census of Canada, 1901 Volume 2 (1904), p. 3. For a summary of membership figures for Bruce and Grey Counties, see Appendix B.

[39] Report of 'West Bruce' by Mrs. J. H. Wismer, Secretary, "The Report of the Farmers' Institutes", Sessional Paper No. 25, Sessional Papers, 1902, p. 12.

Paisley from 1906-1911.[40] Mrs. Donald McIntyre, President of the Centre Bruce Women's Institute from 1902-1909, was also married to a notable member of the Village of Paisley. Donald McIntyre was active in business and the church in Paisley and was reeve of Elderslie Township from 1888-1891.[41] Miss Georgina McBeath, who served as Secretary of Centre Bruce Women's Institute in 1913, was the daughter of one of Elderslie Township's earliest settlers, Thomas McBeath, who retired to Paisley around 1912.[42] Mrs. R. J. Graham served as Vice-President and Secretary for the Centre Bruce Women's Institutes from 1913-1915. Her husband was the station agent in the Village of Ripley for twenty-seven years.[43] Mrs. W. B. Moore served in the capacity of Vice President and President of North Bruce Women's Institutes for over four years. Her husband was reeve of the Village of Lion's Head from 1917-1923.[44]

Officers of West Bruce Women's Institutes included Mrs. D. D. Wark, President from 1909-1910. David Devitt Wark was part owner of D. D. Wark, & J. Baird & Co., shoemakers in the Village of Tara,[45] and was reeve of Tara in 1910.[46] Mrs. Adam Aiken served in the capacity of both Vice-President and President of the West Bruce Women's Institutes from 1907-1915.[47] Her husband was the son of one of the first settlers of Bruce County, John Aiken. A businessman, Adam co-owned Aiken Bros.,[48] a hardware business in Allenford. He was also on the board of trustees of the Allen Methodist (United) Church.[49]

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[40] Mrs. Shoemaker was President in 1910. See list of officers in "Report of the Women's Institutes" Sessional Papers, 1910. For information on Isaiah Shoemaker see Norman McLeod, The History of the County of Bruce Volume 2 (Owen Sound: 1969), p. 330.

[41] List of officers in "Reports of the Women's Institutes" Sessional Papers, 1902-1910. See also the Elderslie Historical Society A History of Elderslie Township, 1851-1977 (Chesley: 1977), pp. 27 and 366 for information on Donald McIntyre. He bought a sawmill in the Paisley in 1875. After it was lost to fire in 1893 he erected an electric power plant in 1895. He was also Superintendent of Lockerby Sunday School and a member of the board of managers of the Knox Presbyterian Church.

[42] "Report of the Women's Institutes" Sessional Papers, 1913. For information on Thomas McBeath see A History of the Elderslie Township, p. 278. A park was named after the McBeath family in the township.

[43] See "Report of the Women's Institutes" Sessional Papers, 1913-1915 and McLeod, The History of the County of Bruce, Volume 2, p. 355.

[44] See "Report of the Women's Institutes", Sessional Papers, 1907-1910 and McLeod, The History of the County of Bruce, Volume 2, p. 291.

[45] See The Arran Township Historical Society Reflections of Arran, 1852-1982 (Owen Sound: 1982), p. 274 and Bruce A. Miller, Tara Before 1981 (n.p., 1981), p. 153.

Mrs. James S. Cameron, Secretary of the West Bruce Women's Institute for over ten years, was also regent of the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire, organized in 1934. During her involvement with these two organizations, Mrs. Cameron resided in the Town of Port Elgin.[50] Mrs. J. H. Wismer served as Vice President of the West Bruce Women's Institutes for two years. Her husband owned a nursery in the Town of Port Elgin.[51] Mrs. D. McTavish, long-time resident of Port Elgin, was the first President of the Port Elgin Women's Institute in 1897. She continued her service in this area as President of the West Bruce Women's Institutes from 1902-1906. She was named Honourary President of the organization in 1910.[52]

A survey of Women's Institute leaders and organizers in Bruce County reveals that they tended to be townswomen rather than farm women. These women did not share the heavy burden of farm work with their families. They were the wives of successful businessmen and community leaders who had the opportunity and time to become

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[46] McLeod, The History of the County of Bruce, Volume 2, p. 185.

[47] "Report of the Women's Institutes" Sessional Papers, 1907-1915.

[48] It was also known as Aiken Hardware.

[49] Reflections of Arran, p. 25 and 49.

[50] See "Report of the Women's Institutes" Sessional Papers, 1906-1915 and McLeod, The History of the County of Bruce, Volume 2, p. 438.

[51] "Report of the Women's Institutes" Sessional Papers, 1904-1905. See also McLeod, The History of the County of Bruce, Volume 2, p. 434.

[52] McLeod The History of the County of Bruce, Volume 2, page 440. See also the reports of the Women's Institutes, Sessional Papers, 1902-1910.

involved in organizations such as the Women's Institutes. While they may have shared a rural background with farm women, their particular place in society determined that their interests would be significantly different from those of their rural counterparts.

Distinctions between women of the farm and women of the town are documented in the following address by a Women's Institute organizer:

> There seems to be a mistaken idea among some that these meetings are only for farmers' wives and those living in rural districts. The towns are as much interested in this matter as the country. There should in fact be no town and city in this matter but all one....But many divide womankind into two classes; those who live in the towns and cities and those who live on the farm. Each class has its own peculiar advantages, thought at first sight it would seem as if the city sister enjoyed the greater number. Closer thought, however, will show that the women on the farm can lead an equally happy life if they will make use of the advantages within their reach.[53]

There is a need to differentiate between the experiences of farm and townswomen in rural areas. Those who organized and regularly attended Institutes were those who had time. In other words, the early Institutes represented mainly those of the rural elite, many of whom lived in town -- women often remote from the experience of the vast majority of Ontario farm women.

The presentation "Co-operation of Town and Country Ladies in Institute Work" revealed a comprehension of the divisions between the rural elite and farm women in rural areas, when it recognized the presence of "class prejudice, or discriminating caste lines". Although the author did not see this as a great problem in her district, she acknowledged that, "...apparently, this is not the condition in all sections, and the question is 'How can we promote unity of interest in Institute work?'".[54] The presenter argued that membership could be increased if, "The idea that Domestic Science means only the preparing of foods" was dispelled as well as, "...the erroneous impression that because Women's Institutes are in some way allied with Farmers' Institutes, they must of necessity concern only farmers' wives."[55] To keep the interest of both town and farm women, the dissemination of knowledge was encouraged in such a way that both, "the busy woman with little time for reading can gather food for thought in busy hours...and the society woman may find the wherewithal to make conversation pleasant and agreeable, and keep abreast with or ahead of her husband on affairs." The author revealed the potential for unfamiliarity of farm women's interests among Women's Institute members when she advised:

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[53] Mrs. Gardner, (President of the North Grey Women's Institute), 'Women's Institutes', ***The Owen Sound Sun***, June 12, 1903, p. 1.

[54] Mrs. (Dr.) Kitchen, 'Co-operation of Town and Country Ladies in Institute Work', Ibid., p. 66.

> If you have ladies unfamiliar with country life, introduce an occasional paper on some of its many interesting and delightful phases, -the springtime, with its ever recurring mystery of the awakening to life of earth with its myriad treasures of field and forest; the time of blossom-laden air, and the bustle of seed time and harvest, not putting in the foreground the work day side, nor clouding the back ground [sic] of the picture with trials and difficulties.[56]

What farm life meant for women cannot be determined from such depictions. By extension, the early Women's Institutes, as the source of such representations, cannot be wholly relied upon to represent the concerns of farm women.

Women's Institutes reports often regretted the underrepresentation of farm women and difficulties experienced in their recruitment. In their fourth year, Women's Institute locals were reporting: "Farmers' wives, as a rule, stay at home too closely, and country people are not nearly as sociable as they ought to be."[57]. Even inducing members to attend meetings was difficult: "...farmers' wives do not seem interested enough to come out to the meetings, though in many cases their husbands have paid their fees."[58] In

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[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid., p. 68.

[57] Report from 'Dufferin' by Mrs. W. J. Craven, Secretary, "The Report of the Farmers' Institutes", Sessional Paper No. 25 Sessional Papers, 1902., p. 12.

[58] Report from "West York" Ibid., p. 70.

1903 the Centre Bruce Institute found that:

> ...no one is willing to take an office, and it is hard to get the women in our district to come out at all.[59]

The South Bruce Institute reported that:

> Probably the most noticeable hindrance met with in our district is lack of time on the part of women to attend the meetings.[60]

The inability to recruit farm women in women's organizations was accounted for in an article entitled "Awakening the Farm Women":

> I am convinced that the reason why the women of the town have made more advancement than their sisters in the country is because they have had better social advantages and have taken a hand in the matter and banded together for mutual betterment.[61]

Failure on the part of farm women to attend meetings was also attributed to indifference and self-satisfaction[62], as well as the lack of adequate transportation.[63]

Another frequent complaint of Women's Institutes was the difficulty in getting members to contribute to meetings. Organizers attributed silence to shyness, low self-esteem and even to ignorance. The difference in experience between the organizers of institutes and farm members is revealed in a comment made by one President who advised:

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[59] Report of 'Centre Bruce', "The Report of the Farmers' Institutes", Sessional Paper No. 25 Sessional Papers, 1904, p. 48.

[60] Report of "South Bruce", Ibid., p. 49.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Various Institutes cited these causes. Ibid., pp. 48-9.

[63] "Our riding is forty miles across with no railway accommodation. We find it impossible for our officers to go around with delegates as expected, as we have not sufficient funds in the treasury to pay their expenses." Report of "Centre Bruce", Ibid., p. 48. "I think June the most suitable time for holding summer meetings in our district, as in that month the farmers are not so busy with their horses, and it is more convenient for their wives and daughters to leave home." Report of "South Grey" Ibid., p. 53.

> I blundered once by assuming that the members present had read at least a few books of which they would have some sort of an opinion, and I tried to coax or force a discussion on books, which resulted in confessions of ignorance by some and angry silence by others.[64]

The same President explained her success in involving members:

> I went to their homes and dictated papers which they read and took the credit of writing quite willingly. Others I suplied [sic] with literature from which they took notes.[65]

At their annual convention in 1906 the Women's Institutes' continuing concern with membership was reflected by numerous presentations, such as: "The Best Way to Increase Membership"; "Organization of Branches"; "Methods to Secure the Active Assistance of Members"; and "How Best to Secure the Co-operation of Town and Country Ladies".[66] Observations such as, "In some communities it will be found that a very great prejudice exists towards the institute, which usually arises through a misunderstanding of what the work really is,"[67] reveal the extent to which the Institutes experienced difficulty enlisting members.

To combat these difficulties, Women's Institutes organized first in towns and villages, and then attempted to recruit from surrounding farms.[68] The tendency of women's organizations to be town-centred was noted by those pushing for the involvement of farm women:

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[64] Mrs. F. E. Webster, 'Methods to Secure the Active Assistance of Members', "Report of the Women's Institutes" Sessional Paper No. 24 Sessional Papers, 1906., p. 65.

[65] Ibid.

[66] The issues of how to secure adequate numbers and how to reconcile the interests of members from the towns and farms occupied seven presenters in all at the convention. "Report of the Women's Institutes", Sessional Paper No. 24 Sessional Papers, 1906., p. 4.

[67] Miss L. McMillan, 'Organization of the Branches', Ibid., p. 60.

> We have found good women's organizations in some country districts, but as a rule such organizations are few or even none, or where they exist they merely radiate from towns....Some of the stronger central organizations are now pushing the country phase of their work with vigor [sic]. Mothers' clubs, church societies, home economics organizations, farmers' and women's institutes, and other associations can accomplish much for farm women....There is much need among country women themselves of a stronger organizing sense for real co-operative betterment.[69]

It was recommended that branches entice potential attenders with the promise of refreshments and social activities. It was even suggested that it was more important to have officers who were popular and well known than those with ability.[70] To maintain the interest of members, it was proposed that programmes be organized ahead of time so that those who could not attend all the meetings could choose those of particular interest. It was suggested that meetings be well-arranged so that "...a woman would feel repaid even if attendance entailed a drive of five or six miles."[71] Distance as well as the constant nature of farm women's work was a deterrent to attending Women's Institutes. One organizer reported that a woman "had driven twelve miles to the meeting, and that her mother...travelled almost as far to keep house for her while she was away."[72]

While the lack of attendance of farm women at Women's Institutes was continually lamented, the high attendance of women and men at joint meetings of Women's and Farmers' Institutes, and the attendance of women at meetings of the Grange, was notable.[73] This perhaps reveals farm women's higher estimation of farm interests over gender specific issues in this period:[74]

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[68] This was recommended in "Organization of Branches", Ibid., and documented in "The Best Way to Increase Membership" by Mrs. (Dr.) Robertson Ibid., pp: 60-61.

[69] Mrs. Bruce Martin, 'Woman's Work on the Farm', ***Farm and Dairy and Rural Home***, February 2, 1911, p. 22.

[70] Robertson, 'The Best Way to Increase Membership', "Report of the Women's Institutes", Sessional Paper No. 24, Sessional Papers, 1906, p. 62.

[71] Kitchen, 'Co-operation of Town and Country Ladies in Institute Work' Ibid., p. 67.

[72] "Report of the Farmers' Institutes", Sessional Paper No. 25 Sessional Papers, 1902., p. 11.

> How often,...at meetings of granges or other gatherings of farmers, (do)...timid women slip modestly into back seats and drink in with much eagerness the new theories about plowing [sic] and silos and all these important matters regarding farm improvements,...little did we realize the latent powers that lay within the breasts of those women; powers only needing the awakening touch to bring into existence thoughts and plans that would revolutionize the conditions in rural communities, beginning with the women themselves.[75]

That the interests of Women's Institutes were contrary to those of farm women was acknowledged by one contemporary observer:

> Some find fault with our Women's Institutes, claiming that we spend too much of our time discussing cooking, pickling, preserving, etc. This should not be the aim

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[73] Women's Institutes organizers often visited Farmers' Institutes to recruit potential women members. This is documented in Fifty Years of Achievement, p. 9. In their yearly report the Women's Institute of South Bruce noted that while 60 women attended the afternoon meeting of the Women's Institute lecture in the town of Walkerton, over 700 people attended the evening meeting of a joint meeting of Women's and Farmers' Institutes. "Report of the Farmers' Institutes", Sessional Paper No. 25, Sessional Papers, 1901., p. 9.

[74] This theme is explored further in Pauline Rankin, "The Politicization of Ontario Farm Women", in Linda Kealey and Joan Sangster, eds. Beyond the Vote: Canadian Women and Politics (Toronto: 1989), pp. 309-332. Rankin argues that Ontario farm women, both in the past and present, have found little appeal in the urban-based feminist movement. Rankin follows in the steps of Bacchi who documents how regional and class differences tended to divide the suffrage cause. Carol L. Bacchi, "Divided Allegiances: The Response of Farm and Labour Women to Suffrage", in Linda Kealey, ed. A Not Unreasonable Claim: Women and Reform in Canada, 1880s-1920s (Toronto: 1979), pp. 89-107.

[75] ***Farm and Dairy and Rural Home***, October 8, 1911, p. 18. The contributions that farm women made to ensure the success of the family farm continued into the political arena. Farm women often submerged commitments to women's issues in favour of rallying with their husbands on farm issues. See Rankin, "The Politicization of Ontario Farm Women".

> and object of our Women's Institute, though some seem to think it is. Recipes are all right, and the majority of us enjoy a well cooked meal, but in this day when help is scarce, would it not be better instead of exchanging recipes and telling each other how to prepare elaborate dishes, which so many have neither time or [sic] strength to do, if we should learn how to simplify our cooking and other work as well, and learn how to save ourselves as many steps as possible....One successful Woman's Institute has a rule that at no meeting shall there be permitted any conversation or discussion of either dress, disease or domestics....It is not our object to draw women away from their home or have them neglect their duty....Let us work so that we will compel people to acknowledge the benefit of the Woman's Institute and so that there will be no such paltry excuses as that a recipe book will take the place of the Woman's Institute meetings.[76]

The early Women's Institutes are useful as a source to understand the prescriptive context within which farm women shaped their lives. They allowed for a forum in which discussions about rural life could occur. The ideas of rural reformers, and, occasionally, of farm women, were presented. Glimpses of the realities of farm women's lives are also revealed by inconsistencies in the rhetoric.

In their enthusiasm for farm women's domestic education, domestic crusaders often revealed the magnitude of farm women's duties. One Women's Institute organizer cited the necessity of a liberal education, entailing the development of reasoning powers, reading skills, and the teaching of music (to cheer and brighten) along with training in domestic economy, hygienics, health, exercise, cooking, sewing and home nursing. The ability to keep household accounts was also valued,[77] as well as the necessity for training in "farm" work:

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[76] Miss Ethel Raby, "Work yet to be done by Women's Institutes", ***Farm and Dairy and Rural Home***, March 9, 1911, p. 17.

[77] "A girl should also be taught the value of money, and how to expend it to the best advantage. The husband is the wage-earner, but it is generally the wife who is financier for the household, and she should try to do her part in spending it judiciously and to keep a strict account of it, and see that none if it is wasted." Mrs. McTavish, (from North Bruce), 'The Education of Our Daughters', "Report of the Women's Institutes", Sessional Paper No. 24 Sessional Papers, 1907, p. 110. Although this article emphasizes farm women's roles as participants in the economy, it also demonstrates a devaluation of their work, in that they are not recognized as wage earners, but wage spenders, even though they often made enough money to purchase most, if not all, household necessities. There were contradictions in the rhetoric -- women's financial role was encouraged, but also downplayed.

> She will also require a thorough knowledge of dairying and everything connected with it; to understand the proper care of milk, its value as food, and how to make a first-class article of butter....Her education would not be complete without a knowledge of gardening and poultry raising, for on the farm both of these have generally to be done by a farmer's wife.[78]

Realizing the limited appeal that their domestic programmes held for farm women, Women's Institutes also adopted new areas of interest in order to recruit them:

> We consider our meetings a benefit in a number of ways, as we discuss most everything that has to do with the home, such as dairying, poultry, gardening, preserving, pickling, etc.[79]

Domestic reformers had to accommodate the extent of farm women's work by extending the meaning of housekeeping:

> We all know there are many branches on a farm which are connected with the housekeeper, such as dairying, calf-raising, chicken-raising, bee-keeping, and so on....[80]

At times, women's education in "farm" work was endorsed by the even the most ardent domestic reformers. Adelaide Hoodless remarked:

> When a scientific knowledge of agriculture - stock raising, dairying, poultry and bee keeping, fruit and flower culture, domestic science, preserving the various fruits and vegetables and the hundred and one things connected with farming - becomes a recognized factor in our institutes, and receive equal respect with the other professions, then, and not till then, may we expect agriculture to receive the attention it deserves...absolutely nothing has been done to arouse the intelligence

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[78] Ibid., pp. 109-110.

[79] 'Women's Institutes: Letters from Officers', "The Report of the Farmers' Institutes", Sessional Paper No. 25 Sessional Papers, 1902., p. 13.

[80] Mrs. W. M. Shields, 'The Farmer's Wife and Farmer Literature', "Report of the Women's Institutes", Sessional Paper No. 24 Sessional Papers, 1907., p. 102.

> of the farmers' wives and daughters to the same scientific level as the graduate of the agricultural college.[81]

That these areas of work were recognized by a domestic crusader to belong to a farm women's sphere of responsibility was significant. Hoodless limited her acknowledgement of the extent of women's work somewhat, however: "It is not necessary for women to work in the fields. But there is a distinct woman's work in the country and on the farm as well as in any other condition of society."[82] Inherent in the domestic reform argument for women's education in farm work was the idea that it would allow women to engage in other activities reformers considered important.

Lessons given by Women's Institutes more often considered domestic responsibilities and home-making, in accordance with the key directives of the organization. Topics such as child care, health care, food preparation, and laundry work were presented alongside addresses on entertaining, women's influence, poetry, literature, eugenics, and home decoration.[83] However, articles also considered women's responsibilities for such things as dairying, marketing, poultry raising, gardening and bee-keeping. In 1909, of 213 addresses given by 34 lecturers, approximately 25 related to women's work other than "domestic" work. Along with such concerns as: "Sanitation and Hygiene"; "The Feeding and Care of Infants"; "Hints For Home Nursing"; and "Dressmaking - Cutting, Fitting, Sewing" were lectures on such topics as: "The Management of Poultry"; "Will the Dairy Cow Remove the Mortgage?"; "The Farmer's Fruit and Vegetable Garden"; "Winter Egg Production"; and "Killing, Plucking and Shaping For

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[81] Hoodless, 'Organization in the Rural Districts', "The Report of the Farmers' Institutes", Sessional Paper No. 26 Sessional Papers, 1898., p. 261.

[82] Ibid.

[83] This summary of topics was taken from the lectures given by Ontario Women's Institutes in 1913. "The Report of the Women's Institutes", Sessional Paper No. 41 Sessional Papers, 1914., pp. 20-29. The concern with such issues reflected the interests of the leadership of the Women's Institutes who recruited doctors, educators, domestic science advocates, and urban reformers to lecture to the membership.

Market".[84]

Recognition of women's "farm" work by the Women's Institutes occurred primarily at the local level because of the involvement of agricultural lecturers with the Institutes and the combining of the interests of educational reformers and domestic reformers at the Ontario Agricultural College and at the MacDonald Institute.[85] The closer involvement of farm women with the Institutes at the local level was reflected in changes in the Institutes' agendas.

While the extent of women's 'farm' work was revealed and supported by farm reformers, and even by domestic science advocates, this aspect of their work was also often ignored and downplayed. Frequently, maternal feminists portrayed farm women's work as entirely domestic, asserting their primary interest in encouraging farm women as homemakers. In 1913, in its annual report to the National Council of Women, with which they were affiliated, the Women's Institutes of Ontario contended that farm women were too occupied in their home-making duties to have time for other farm pursuits. In his presentation to the NCW, George Putnam, Superintendent of Women's Institutes and Minister of Agriculture for Ontario, articulated what he regarded as the Institutes' main interests, and his interpretation of what the work of Ontario farm women involved:

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[84] "Report of the Women's Institutes" Sessional Paper No. 41 Sessional Papers, 1910., pp. 15-21. It is important to note how the occupations of lecturers were significant to the topics they discussed. In the reports of the Women's Institutes, the biographies of the lecturers were often included with a list of their lectures. Nurses and doctors tended to concentrate on health; domestic science graduates on cooking, and other household tasks; teachers on child raising; while non-professional, locally-educated (Guelph OAC and MacDonald Institute) lecturers, more closely related to farm life, concentrated on women's "farm" work and monetary issues.

[85] The establishment of the MacDonald Institute was described by Dr. James W. Robertson: "The MacDonald Movement, as helped on by Sir William C. MacDonald aims at helping the rural population to understand better what education is and what it can do for them and their children." It offered courses for women: "There will also be a women's department, and short courses will be offered to farmers' daughters in sewing, cooking, dressmaking and cutting, millinery, housekeeping and so on. There will also be short courses for women in dairying, poultry keeping, bee-keeping and fruit culture." Dr. James W. Robertson, "Report of the Women's Institutes" Sessional Paper No. 24 Sessional Papers, 1906, pp. 57-58. The MacDonald Institute was built on the OAC grounds at Guelph. Walker, Collins, Hood, Fifty Years of Achievement, p. 8.

> While the main efforts towards instruction in the Institutes have to do mainly with Domestic Science, Domestic Art and health problems, some instruction by way of lectures and distribution of literature, is given to the members along agricultural lines - fruit growing, vegetable growing, bee keeping, poultry raising, dairying, etc. The women residing in our country districts, together with all the female help they can attract from the larger centres, or from among the immigrants, are fully occupied in performing the duties devolving upon them as housekeepers and homemakers; and, while the opportunities presented in the agricultural lines above noted are attractive, very few of our Ontario women can take advantage of them.[86]

Women's 'farm' work was discouraged by those intent on encouraging the domestic, mothering roles of farm women. Although Women's Institute leaders admitted to giving instruction in farm work for the benefit of farm women, they asserted their intent to reduce this aspect of farm women's labour, and their primary motive to instruct them as homemakers:

> There is a general misconception as to the real object of the establishment of these Institutes throughout the rural districts and small towns of the province. Many are inclined to look upon them as an educational movement for the purpose of teaching the women of the farm how they may undertake the farming operations which are now for the most part carried on by men. This is not the province of the organization, although it is true that instruction is given in dairying, bee-keeping, and poultry raising, to a limited extent, for the benefit of both the men and women of the farm. The main object of the Women's Institutes is to instruct the home-keepers in methods which will lessen their work and increase its efficiency.[87]

Like farm reformers, domestic reformers were interested in enlightening farm women in their work: "Until the women of our rural districts are aroused to a higher conception of their duties...little progress will be made."[88] By "duties", however, domestic reformers meant household work. They reminded farm women that: "The instinct of the true woman points to the home, and this is as it should be."[89]

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[86] National Council of Women of Canada, Report of the Twentieth Annual Meeting of the National Council of Women of Canada (Toronto: 1913), p. xxxvi of the Appendix.

[87] Geo. A. Putnam, 'Announcement of the Superintendent', "Report of the Farmers' Institutes", Sessional Paper No. 25 Sessional Papers, 1904., p. 5.

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[88] Hoodless, 'Organization in the Rural Districts', "The Report of the Farmers' Institutes", Sessional Paper No. 26 Sessional Papers, 1898., p. 262.

[89] "Practical Education the Best", ***Farm and Dairy and Rural Home***, October 5, 1911, p. 1.

AGRARIAN REFORM AND THE RURAL PRESS

> Every generation has advanced its special definition of woman's proper place, and every generation has devised public and private programs to promote and enhance that definition.[1]

In the years before World War One Ontario farm women were faced with a proliferation of literature which prescribed appropriate roles and behaviours. They were encouraged, among other things, to make farm homes "homier"; to enjoy more leisure time; to ease their burden of work; to be educated and "scientific" in their work; to employ labour-saving devices; to raise and educate their children according to popular ideas of the day; and to involve themselves and their families in 'uplifting' pursuits such as reading and music.

The source of this advice was the social reform movement.[2] Reformers urged change upon farm women as part of their effort to promote "improvement" in rural life. Their discussions of rural women's lives reveal various agendas -- agendas of the progressives for better health and education and the programmes of both reform organizations and government to improve farming and to keep families on the farms. Women were to occupy a certain 'sphere' articulated and experienced by a select few, especially urban, middle-class women and women of the rural elite. They were to help their husbands in a reformation of farm work that was to benefit themselves, Ontario, and Canada as a whole. They were to educate and raise children in a manner seen as appropriate by members of the medical and educational professions.[3]

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[1] Sheila M. Rothman, Woman's Proper Place: A History of Changing Ideals and Practices, 1870 to the Present (New York: 1978), p. 5.

[2] The mid-1880's to the early 1920s witnessed the rise and fall of the social reform movement in Canada. On the social gospel, see Ramsay Cook, The Regenerators: Social Criticism in Late Victorian English Canada (Toronto: 1985). For women and reform see Linda Kealey, ed. A Not Unreasonable Claim: Women and Reform in Canada, 1880s-1920s (Toronto: 1979). On moral reform and social conditions see Mariana Valverde, The Age of Light, Soap and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925 (Toronto, 1991).

Rural reform was only one aspect of a larger reform movement which grew out of the anxiety generated by rapid social change.[4] Although industrialization and urbanization promised much, the decline of a familiar way of life concerned many. The vices of city life preoccupied business, the church, government and social reform groups. The social reform movement was dominated by members of the middle class who shared common concerns about "regeneration and social purity." The expressions of reform were various, including prohibition, urban reform, health, women's suffrage, education, conservation, and rural reform.[5]

The decline of agriculture was an important theme of the reform era. In the eastern provinces, especially, the rural population declined, both in absolute numbers and in proportion to the urban population.[6] The movement of rural Ontarians to urban centres and to the West was met with mixed reactions. The prairie farming boom and urban growth were regarded with optimism, but rural depopulation was seen as a threat to the quality of life in the province, and in the country as a whole. A contemporary article expressed a widely-held sentiment:

Canada is facing a serious crisis, particularly Eastern Canada. Agriculture, the

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[3] For analysis of rural reform efforts aimed towards Saskatchewan farm women in the 1920's, see Marilyn Barber, "Help For Farm Homes: The Campaign to End Housework Drudgery in Rural Saskatchewan in the 1920's", Scientia Canadiensis: Journal of the History of Canadian Science, Technology and Medicine Volume 9, No. 1 (June 1985), pp. 3-27. Barber argues that the encouragement of farm household technology was linked to efforts to entice labour to farms. No distinction between reformers and farm women in rural reform is made by Barber, however, who suggests that their goals were the same.

[4] For a study of the rural reform movement in the United States, see William L. Bowers, "Country-Life Reform, 1900-1920: A Neglected Aspect of Progressive Era History", Agricultural History Volume XLV, No. 4 (October 1971), pp. 211-221.

[5] Robert Craig Brown and Ramsay Cook, Canada, 1896-1921: A Nation Transformed, (Toronto: 1974), p. 2.

[6] See Appendix A (rural and urban population figures for Ontario).

> great basic industry, is declining. Rural communities are losing in population, and consequently in social, educational, and spiritual advantages.[7]

Agriculture, especially in Ontario, was presented as the driving force of regional and national progress. In 1909, C. C. James, the Deputy Minister of Agriculture for Ontario wrote:

> The hope of Ontario lies, largely, in its agricultural population. Farming has been the mainstay of this Province. It would be a national calamity if our Ontario farms were to be deserted; it would be a sure cause of decadence if there should be any great falling off in the numbers and character of our farming community....We cannot shut our eyes to the fact that we are coming into a critical period.[8]

W. C. Good, a prominent rural reformer, asserted: "Our future destiny, and national character depend on the quality of life that we can maintain in our rural districts."[9] It was argued that increased independence, morality, and peace could be found in the countryside. Rural life was portrayed as having a closeness to nature, resulting not only in more beautiful and healthy surroundings, but also in a closer relationship with God.

While the promotion of agriculture had a long history in Ontario, perceived problems in agriculture gave impetus to the agrarian reform movement.[10] In the years

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[7] "Causes of Depopulation - Some Remedies Suggested" ***Farm and Dairy and Rural Home***, November 6, 1913, p. 1. John MacDougall's Rural Life in Canada: its Trend and Tasks (Toronto: 1913, reprinted Toronto, 1973) is a contemporary book-length discussion of rural decline.

[8] ***The Farmer's Advocate***, December 9, 1909, p. 1944.

[9] From a speech to the Empire Club in Toronto, 1916, quoted in Brown and Cook, Canada, 1896-1921: A Nation Transformed, p. 316. (Good was involved with the Grange and the United Farmers of Ontario.) C. C. James also emphasized this theme: "In these days of exciting competition for more wealth and power, it is well to keep before us the building up of prosperous, contented, happy rural families, upon which our country's future will so largely depend." ***The Farmer's Advocate***, December 9, 1909, p. 1944.

[10] For a history of agricultural reform, especially educational, see T. C. Nesmith, "The Philosophy of Agriculture: The Promise of Intellect in Ontario Farming, 1835-1914", PhD Thesis, Carleton University, 1988. Studies of central Canadian agricultural production conclude that change was motivated not only by declining wheat markets, but also by the

1830-1880 both practical and scientific knowledge of agriculture was emphasized. Agricultural publications, associations, exhibitions, educational programmes and government agencies abounded, culminating in the establishment of the Ontario Agricultural College in 1874. By the end of this period the decline of the wheat staple, the shortage of arable land, the attraction of urban, industrial work, competition from the American midwest for farm immigrants and overseas wheat markets, and the opening of the Canadian Northwest caused widespread concern about Ontario agriculture.

A Royal Commission into agriculture, established in 1880, advocated a shift to mixed farming and increased efforts in agricultural education. The shift from cereal to mixed farming was the principal transformation in central Canadian agriculture in the late nineteenth century. A wider basis of knowledge was required of farmers. They were encouraged to be familiar with the latest innovations in various crops, products, techniques, markets and equipment. The provincial government and its affiliated bodies (the Farmers' Institutes, Women's Institutes and the Ontario Agricultural College) increased their efforts to educate farmers and their families. Improvement in farm production, marketing and labour were key issues in reform platforms. The scientification and mechanization of agriculture, as well as the adoption of business methods, were advocated as means to improve Ontario farming and to stop rural outmigration.

Of equal significance to rural reformers was the farming community itself. There was general agreement that rural families, schools, churches and newspapers could provide valuable assistance in halting rural population decline.[11] Reformers believed that

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opportunity for profit in other areas. See Kenneth Norrie and Doug Owram, A History of the Canadian Economy (Toronto: 1991), pp. 318-321.

[11] One article concluded: "...the farmers themselves, the press and our educational institutions, should put forth their best efforts to get people, especially young people, to stay on the land." Starvation of city dwellers and the stagnation of industry were seen as the results of inaction. Donald Stewart, "The Back-To-The-City Movement", ***The Farmer's Advocate***, July 8, 1920, p. 1268. Another article also concluded that: "...the problem is one of the community as well as one of the family. The family, the school, the library, the social life, and recreational life of the community must sell the farm boy and girl the life work of farming and rural life." "Making Farm Life Attractive", ***The Tara Leader***, February 5, 1920, p. 2. For a study of the country life movement in the Canadian prairies see David

rural institutions needed to be reformed in order to be effective. The press, farm families, rural schools and churches were blamed for undermining rural self esteem.[12] The press was condemned for boosting city life at the expense of rural. Schools were accused of encouraging the young to leave, both by teaching a curriculum which promoted an urban lifestyle and urban values, and by encouraging further levels of study away from the farm.[13] The clergy, like teachers, were depicted as reluctant to live in the country, preferring instead to be placed in urban areas. Farmers were also accused of not making the farm an attractive, comfortable and stimulating environment.[14]

C. Jones, "'We can't live on air all the time': Country Life and the Prairie Child", in Patricia T. Rooke and Rudolph L. Schnell, eds. Studies in Childhood History: A Canadian Perspective (Calgary: 1982), pp. 185-202. Jones argues that the ideals presented in the educational and propaganda campaign aimed at rural families often failed to meet realities, causing many children to leave rural life.

[12] "There are three institutions in every community, viz., the Home, School and Church. The abnormal drift cityward of our rural young people, and a similar desire in many of those that remain, indicates that one or all three, are at fault." "What will Help to Keep us There", letter to the editor from M. J. Slemmon (Huron County), ***The Farmer's Advocate***, February 1, 1917, p. 175.

[13] One contemporary summed up many farmers' concerns about schools: "There are many causes for so many young people leaving the land, and, to begin with, the school has a great influence on the vocation a young person chooses. The boy or girl looks to his or her teacher as an ideal and it is sometimes found the teacher has little sympathy with the life of the farm. Agriculture is not taught in the rural schools as much as it should be, and is not always held up by the teacher in the rural district as being the ideal healthful, profitable and enjoyable life for any normal young person. Rather, our schools very often seem to have in view the fitting of the young for life in an office, or store, than for life on a farm, where it is more important to know how to judge a dairy or beef animal correctly than it is to know the exact date when a certain battle was fought, or how to do a problem in algebra. The school gardens and school fairs are certainly a step in the right direction, but much more needs to be accomplished to bring agriculture to the forefront in our rural schools." "A Variety of Causes", letter to the Editor from Ernest B. Chilcott (Brant County), ***The Farmer's Advocate***, February 1, 1917., p. 173.

[14] "The lack of attractive home surroundings makes many young people dissatisfied. If farmers would plant more trees and flowers, keep fences and gates in good repair and use a liberal supply of paint, to keep their buildings brightened up, instal [sic] the telephone, have the rural mail, and spend an hour in recreation each evening, many young people would not desert the farm for the city." "Five Reasons for the Trek", letter to the editor from John J. Flaherty (Wellington County), ***The Farmer's Advocate***, February 8, 1917, p. 218.

The lack of social graces among rural dwellers was deplored, and comparisons between the urban sophisticate and the country bumpkin were regularly presented. One "Farmer's Son" commented:

> ...anyone well acquainted with ordinary city thought about farmers, knows too well that the thought is of one illiterate, dirty and sordid...and, where anything strikes their attention in homely comfort and cultured habits of life amongst farmers, they are spoken of, by way of distinction, as 'gentlemen' farmers.[15]

Criticism of the farm family portrayed the farmer as boorish and selfish[16] and the farm wife as a drudge. This portrayal illustrated the incompatibility of reform ideas with the farm lifestyle. Often, inconsistencies would emerge in the rhetoric, further undermining its credibility. Farm men were boors when they would not make life easier for their families, they were "enlightened" when they did. Farm women were "meek" drudges[17] when they would not challenge their husbands to make their lives better[18]; but they were also described as an indispensable, influential part of the farm.

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[15] ***The Farmer's Advocate***, February 27, 1908, p. 338. An article by a "Mrs. Hopkins" depicted farmers as unsophisticated, rough and unclean, ignorant of, "the use of either a tooth-brush or nail-file". "Farm Conditions Improved", ***The Farmer's Advocate***, May 5, 1910, p. 771.

[16] Many articles blamed selfishness on the part of the farmer for sons and daughters leaving home. He was accused of withholding, among other things, praise, money, and real responsibility from his sons and daughters, and leaving them too much a share of the drudgery of farm work. One article entitled "The Farmer of the Future" in ***Farm and Dairy and Rural Home***, cites the greatest weakness of the farmer as "...parsimony in dealing with the family." The farmer is characterized as having a pretty thick skin "when improved conditions that involve decreasing their precious bank accounts are mentioned." ***Farm and Dairy and Rural Home***, October 26, 1911, p. 14.

[17] The following poem by Hamlin Garland was often referred to by reform interests:

> "Born and scrubbed, suffered and died, that's all you need to say, elder; never mind sayin' 'made a bride', nor when her hair got gray; jes' say, born an' worked t'death; that fits it, saves y'r breath.
> Made me think of a clock run down, sure's y'r born, that woman did; a workin' away f'r ol' Ben Brown, patient as Job an' meek as a kid; till she sort o' stopped one day, heart quit tickn' a feller'd say.
> Wasn't old, nuther - forty-six-no, jes humpt, an' thin an' gray; washin' an' churnin' an' sweepin', by Joe!, f'r 14 hours or more a day.
> Worked to death. Starved to death, died f'r lack of air an' sun - dyin' f'r rest, an' f'r what she'd done.
> An' many's the woman this very day, Elder, dyin' slow in that selfsame way."

The article which cited this poem remarked that "...woman on the farm has not yet come into her own." "Life History of a Farm Woman", ***Farm and Dairy and Rural Home***, October 5, 1911, p. 21.

Reformers considered farm women a key factor in the reversal of rural decline:

> The best farms that we have ever visited have almost invariably been built up by the united efforts of a man and a woman. There is no other industry where the wife can be of such assistance to the husband, or where her happiness depends so much on the sympathy and cooperation of the husband as in farming. If we would have happy farm women the close connection between the interests of the farm and home must be recognized and the work of both departments be carried on with sympathetic cooperation. Let us not forget that rural progress depends more on the happiness and comfort of the farm women than upon well tilled fields and well built and well stocked barns.[19]

Household improvement was linked to farm improvement, and a "close connection between the interests of the farm and home" was seen to result in greater farming success. Reformers believed that if farm life was more attractive to farm women, fewer family members would leave rural areas.[20] The refurbishing of homes, as well as the employment of household labour-saving devices, and other conveniences were seen as the means of keeping women happier.[21] Increased leisure time was advocated, as well as a consideration of increased financial independence for both women and children. Cooperation and sympathy among family members was another theme of rural reform. Potential differences and conflicts between children and parents were addressed.[22] Isolation in rural areas was seen as especially detrimental, primarily affecting women and children; good roads and railroad connections were lobbied for.[23] Reformers also believed that a means of maintaining a higher quality of life in rural areas included the elevation of the mind. Formal education was encouraged[24] as well as instruction in the art of social conversation, the appreciation of music and literature, proper manners and cleanliness:

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[18] The common argument was: "I have often wondered just why it is that more of them do not insist that in the farm home they share in the labor-savers, which all progressive farmers are installing and would not do without in their barns!" "Overcoming Hard Work by Machinery", ***Farm and Dairy and Rural Home***, October 9, 1913, p. 6.

[19] "Sympathetic Cooperation", ***Farm and Dairy and Rural Home***, October 10, 1912., p. 16.

[20] One article entitled "He Waited too Long" relates the story of a woman who left her husband because he failed to make improvements in the farm home. She wrote: "Why not make your improvements now before you have driven your wives away from you or into their graves." Mrs. P. Richards, "He Waited too Long" ***Farm and Dairy and Rural Home***, May 16, 1912, p. 19. The article "Some Reasons Why Boys Leave the Farm" explained: "...boys become dissatisfied because of lack of labor-saving conveniences, both on the farm and in the home...they see their mother working under endless difficulties that a small investment would remove." ***The Farmer's Advocate***, April 17, 1919, p. 754.

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[21] Some examples of literature recommending farm improvements include: "Home Comforts an Aid to Farm Work" ***The Tara Leader***, August 21, 1919, p. 2; "Entertaining in the Farm Home" ***The Tara Leader***, July 17, 1919, p. 6; "Make Farm Life Pleasant" ***The Chesley Enterprise***, December 4, 1913, p. 7; "An Old Home Made Modern and Attractive" ***Farm and Dairy and Rural Home***, October 9, 1913, p. 5; and, "Cleaning Up The Fields" ***The Tara Leader***, October 8, 1897, p. 2.

[22] Those problems which were seen to result in the departure of the young included: overwork, lack of praise and financial compensation and the withholding of responsibility. These grievances are noted in such articles as: "Opportunity for the Farmers' Sons" ***Farm and Dairy and Rural Home***, January 25, 1912, p. 15; "Source of the Boys' Discontent" ***The Farmer's Advocate***, October 22, 1908, p. 1621; "Why Do Girls Leave The Farm?" ***The Tara Leader***, June 13, 1912, p. 1; "Our Young Men and Overwork" ***The Canada Farmer***, September 1875, p. 173; "Girls and Farm Life" ***The Farmer's Advocate***, July 1, 1893, p. 253; "Shall Our Boys Stay On The Farm?" ***The Canada Farmer***, August 30, 1873, pp. 310-311; and, "The Young Man on the Farm" ***The Farmer's Advocate***, April 26, 1906, p. 691.

[23] The building and maintenance of country roads and railroads were seen as a means to repopulate rural districts, reduce the cost of living and reduce isolation. See "The Farmer's Answer to the Road Problem" ***The Chesley Enterprise***, May 15, 1913, p. 7; "First Train From Toronto" ***The Owen Sound Advertiser***, June 19, 1873; and "Ontario's Railway" and "A Railway Bonus" ***The Tara Leader***, November 9, 1911, p. 1.

[24] "One of the best investments that any farmer can make, with a view to helping his boys and girls in the future, is in giving these boys and girls a good liberal education that will enable them to compete with others and hold their own in the future." ***Farm and Dairy and Rural Home***, January 25, 1912, p. 15. For other examples of the promotion of education see: "Send Your Boy to Agricultural College" ***The Tara Leader***, September 25, 1919, p. 2; "What Education Should Farmers' Daughters Receive?" ***Farm and Dairy and Rural Home***, January 8, 1914, p. 17; "Are Girls Worth Educating?" ***Farm and Dairy and Rural Home***, March 27, 1913, p. 25; "Rural School Problem" ***The Chesley Enterprise***, April 13, 1911, p. 6; and, "Education For Girls" ***Farm and Dairy and Rural Home***, October 9, 1913, p. 1094.

> Farmers...must have more order, beauty, cleanliness, neatness....They must do as others do and raise the standard of their girls as well as boys by education. They must have pianos and music, with books and newspapers, and these things can be got [sic] one after another, when once they exert determination to better their condition. The Farmer [sic] must be more neat in his dress....The neglected and slovenly personal appearance of the agricultural population...is very apparent.[25]

Reform measures, while aimed at the preservation of a rural way of life, embraced the ideas of the new secular industrial order. Although reformers sought to maintain an idealized rural society, they introduced modern, progressive ideas and methods which valued the latest in science, education and technology. The argument that the attraction of city life could be countered by the improvement of social amenities, including telephones, electricity and running water in rural areas, reflected urban imitation.[26]

Leaders of reform organizations in this period were from the rural elite. They usually resided in the towns and villages of Ontario. Some were influential descendants of first generation Ontario farmers. They were all involved in the business, political and church affairs of their communities. Taking their cue from urban reform counterparts, the rural elite soon controlled rural reform agendas. Just as it is important to distinguish between the reform motives of rural reformers and urban reformers, so too, is it important to distinguish the goals of the rural elite from average Ontario farmers. Each reform organization had a particular agenda in its quest for rural improvement. The rural press not only reflected the particular ideas of its staff and the opinions of the readers who contributed to it, but also the goals of business interests which placed advertisements in it. Discussions of farm women's lives from these sources, then, must be understood in light of their objectives.

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[25] "Encouragement to Young Farmers" by 'C. C.' ***The Canada Farmer***, September 1872, p. 325. The author of another article related the awkwardness of farm families with city visitors and then wrote: "The above picture has many a counterpart in the farms of the farmers through the country, and is often repeated. The children have to be well into their teens before they are able to keep their ground when their 'city cousins' come." He goes on to depict what was desirable in farm families: "But there are families where the reverse is the case; the mother can receive company with ease and grace; the father can talk fluently on religion, politics...and probably also on different scientific subjects, evincing altogether no mean acquaintance with the literature of the day; and the children are intelligent and refined. Ignorance and boorishness are no necessary concomitants of farm life." A letter to the editor from "Cultivateur" entitled "Social Disadvantages of Farm Life" ***The Canada Farmer***, October 15, 1868, p. 312.

[26] See Keith Robson Fleming Power At Cost: Ontario Hydro and Rural Electrification, 1911-1958 (Montreal, 1992).

The Farmer's Advocate and **Farm and Dairy and Rural Home** were two newspapers that were outspoken on rural reform issues.[27] The rural press presented two distinct perspectives on the issue of rural decline. One saw the inculcation of modern, urban standards as ultimately benefitting the rural population.[28] The other focused on the loss of a rural philosophy of life, the economic uncertainty, and the threat to Canadian democracy and political morality that rural decline threatened.[29] Often, these two positions were presented concurrently.[30]

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[27] These newspapers are seen to have been especially pessimistic members of the Ontario rural press in a study by William Robert Young, "The Countryside on the Defensive: Agricultural Ontario's Views of Rural Depopulation, 1900-1914" M.A. Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1971. The circulation of ***The Farmer's Advocate***, published in London, Ontario numbered: 30,016 weekly in 1905, 1906 and 1907; 27,500 weekly in 1908 and 1909, and 32,500 weekly in 1912. These figures, and the figures for ***Farm and Dairy and Rural Home*** are from The Canadian Almanac, Toronto: The Copp, Clark Company, Limited, 1904-1915 cited by Young, Appendix A, p. 223. The Canadian Almanac did not report Canadian newspaper circulation figures until 1905. As well, circulation figures for ***The Farmer's Advocate*** are not included for the years 1910-1911. Circulation for ***Farm and Dairy and Rural Home*** totalled 40,000 fortnightly in 1905 and 1906, 10,400 fortnightly in 1907, 5,000 weekly in 1908; and 10,000 weekly in 1909, 1910 and 1911. In 1904 ***The Farming World*** merged with ***The Canadian Farm and Home***, and was known as ***The Farming World and Canadian Farm and Home*** from 1904 to 1907. In 1908 it joined with the ***Canadian Dairyman*** and was called ***Farm and Dairy and Rural Home***. It was then published in Peterboro, rather than Toronto. Ibid.

[28] Young ascribes this more moderate viewpoint by those "who declined to espouse complete pessimism" to such newspapers as ***The Canadian Countryman*** and ***The Farmer's Magazine***. Young, "The Countryside on the Defensive", p. 128.

[29] Young attributed this view to W. L. Smith of ***The Weekly Sun***, H. B. Cowan of ***Farm and Dairy and Rural Home***, as well as ***The Farmer's Advocate***. Ibid.

[30] ***Farm and Dairy and Rural Home*** and ***The Farmer's Advocate*** were certainly the most outspoken newspapers on rural reform, hence their use as sources in this study. By 1909 these two newspapers began to focus on economic problems as the

Reform interests in the rural press sought to stem the tide of depopulation and to maintain a rural way of life by boosting country life. ***Farm and Dairy and Rural Home*** asserted:

> ...the more the advantages of modern rural life are held up and emphasized before the youth of our land...the better the chance of inducing them not to forsake the most independent, healthiest, and most satisfactory mode of obtaining a livelihood under the sun....[31]

A reader of another agricultural paper commented:

> 'The Farmer's Advocate' has for years been working to convince the farmers of Canada that farming is the most independent, the healthiest, the happiest, the most profitable, and, in short, the most desirable occupation to be found.[32]

This idealized view of rural life did not always go unchallenged by readers of the rural press. A comment by one ***Farm and Dairy*** reader revealed that she found the farm success stories repeatedly presented by the newspaper discouraging:

> Everybody we read of in your paper has everything around them in such perfect shape. We are just starting and everything looks so common in comparison with that of which we read.[33]

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fundamental concern of rural life. This approach was usually critical of urban business interests. In his study, Young also relates a change in focus of these two papers. He argues that after 1908, the ***Farm and Dairy and Rural Home***, under the leadership of Cowan, moved into a more radical group, joined after 1911 by ***The Farmer's Advocate***, making increasing attacks on the metropolitan power structure. Ibid., p. 7.

[31] "Keep the Boy on the Farm", ***Farm and Dairy and Rural Home***, January 9, 1913, p. 5.

[32] From "Why the Boys Leave", a letter to the editor from 'The Boy Who Left - And Came Back', ***The Farmer's Advocate***, March 11, 1909, p. 378.

[33] "Be Ye Not Discouraged", ***Farm and Dairy and Rural Home***, October 5, 1911, p. 14. Another reader wrote: Mr. C. S. Funk in a recent magazine article has a glowing picture of what farming will be in future years. I don't know who this Mr. Funk is. Perhaps he never lived on a farm. If he had I don't believe he would be so optimistic about the early consummation of his "dream". He has certainly set a high ideal for us. "The Farmer of the Future" written by 'Another Hired Man', ***Farm and Dairy and Rural***

To this, ***Farm and Dairy*** had a ready response:

> It is wrong for anyone to become discouraged as was this young woman who spoke to us so frankly. These fine things may not be for her to-day, nor yet tomorrow; but, literally speaking, for the day after tomorrow if she will but use aright the information given in these columns....Our special articles about successful farmers afford ideals to which others may attain in a few years. Wives of farmers have before them infinite possibilities of helping their husbands on towards success if they will but read the articles in Farm and Dairy and encourage their mates on to greater effort more intelligently directed towards the ideals that have reached successful fruition in the farms and farmers about which we tell in Farm and Dairy.[34]

Other readers also disputed the rosy depictions of farm life in the rural press:

> You...point out the possibility of a truly ideal life on the farm, and people of all times have doubtless been allured thereto by the same romantic conceptions of happiness, free from the harsh and bitter experiences of city business life....School theories about farming may be made beautiful to the child-mind, but they will be powerless against the hard experiences....When farming is more profitable, capital and labor will go in that direction, just as naturally as water would flow down hill [sic]. And, because of this fact,...editorial comment on farm life...is only a sort of artificial force-pump, trying to force back the current.[35]

In their encouragement of rural improvement, reformers often promoted a view and standard of farm life that was incompatible with the experiences of those familiar with it.

The press was especially persistent in its encouragement of modern technologies on the farm. As late as 1911, ***Farm and Dairy and Rural Home*** cited a report made to the Canadian Household Economic Association which concluded that only five per cent of rural homes in Ontario had running water. The newspaper article suggested that this

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Home, October 26, 1911, p. 14.

[34] Ibid.

[35] A letter to the editor from "A Farmer's Son, Carleton County", ***The Farmer's Advocate***, February 7, 1908, pp. 337-338.

figure could be raised by farmers if they really wanted.[36] In the next year ***Farm and Dairy and Rural Home*** conducted its own survey to determine the "...one improvement most needed in our farm homes". The newspaper surveyed 100 farm women and reached the conclusion that: "...fully 99 per cent. of our farm women still carry their water from the outside well or spring. This entails an endless amount of labor and in cold, stormy weather great discomfort."[37] Those who replied to the survey voiced the desire for the latest in household technology, including vacuum cleaners, washing machines, gasoline stoves, improved lighting, telephones, and refrigerators. The familiarity with the latest in modern conveniences of farm women indicates the persistent attempts to urge them upon the farm community. That running water and indoor bathrooms[38] were most desired by those questioned indicates the low level of technology present in farm homes. The relatively late date of this article indicates that earlier lobbying for these technologies was largely unproductive, and reveals the existence of impediments to obtaining was what considered essential by reform interests.

Reformers were aided in their promotion of new technologies by businesses interested in marketing their products. As consumer goods became increasingly important in the Canadian economy, there arose a growing awareness on the part of manufacturers and advertisers as to the potential of the rural market.[39] Rural newspapers encouraged the placement of commercial advertisements in their pages. In an article entitled "Ad Talk", ***Farm and Dairy and Rural Home*** claimed that "...farm papers pull...profitable results for advertisers. Soon...they will by increasing numbers come after farm business through farm papers."[40] Often, rural women's purchasing power was used to encourage the placement of advertisements. The same article recognizes women's role on farms in light of contemporary statistics indicating that, of the ten billion dollars spent annually in the U.S. for food, shelter and clothing, ninety per cent of this sum was spent by women:

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[36] This figure was presented by a Mr. J. F. MacKay in an address before the Canadian Household Economic Association. The article proposed that rural women, specifically, were capable of changing the low figure: "Women of the country, you can raise that percentage if you really wish to. Why not be comfortable?" "A Talk With Country Women", ***Farm and Dairy and Rural Home***, December 14, 1911, p. 14.

[37] "Most Needed Improvement", ***Farm and Dairy and Rural Home***, October 10, 1912, p. 16.

[38] "...almost every farm woman in our land has her heart set on running water and a bathroom in the home." Ibid.

[39] This theme is explored in the case of farmers in the U.S. Midwest in the first half of the twentieth century by Mary Neth, "Preserving the Family Farm: Farm Families and Communities in the Midwest, 1900-1940". PhD Thesis, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1987. See especially chapter eight.

> Department Stores...direct about 95% of their advertising to women; about 80% of their display space is devoted to goods that appeal to women as buyers....These facts it will pay you to keep in mind. Build on this when you prepare your advertising!...We recognize woman and her supreme influence and power as a buyer. We give such recognition by each week devoting in Farm and Dairy a large department to woman's special interests....[41]

Farm women were not simply viewed as consumers -- the primary purchasers of food, clothing and other household necessities. The economic role of farm women was also increasingly highlighted and encouraged in this period. They often sold products from the dairy and garden and their marketing role was especially recognizable and recognized in difficult economic times. They were encouraged in their work by reformers interested in improving the economic situation of Ontario farming, by those interested in improving home life, and by business interests concerned with selling their products.

The incompatibility of reform ideas about farm men and women's work is revealed in the inconsistencies of reform rhetoric. Farm families were urged to cooperate and to help each other in the betterment of farm life. Conversely, farm women and men were encouraged to maintain separate spheres of work and responsibility. The home was promoted as the proper sphere for women, while, at the same time, women were encouraged to engage in outdoor "profitable" pursuits such as dairying, poultry raising, bee-keeping and gardening. While women were seen as overburdened when they assisted men in farm work, they were also encouraged to be their husband's "helpmeets". Farm women were described as the savers and spenders of their husbands' money, but their money-making efforts in dairying and poultry-raising were also recognized as maintaining the household and as providing the means for starting up in farming.

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[40] "Ad. Talk", ***Farm and Dairy and Rural Home***, October 10, 1912, p. 17.

[41] Ibid. Another article estimated that 80 per cent of the income of the world was spent by women. "Education That is Needed", ***Farm and Dairy and Rural Home***, October 5, 1911, p. 15.

The incompatibility of reformers' concepts of work-home relationships with the realities of farm life becomes apparent in the frequent criticisms of farmers for improving the farm at the expense of home comfort. Reformers, with their ideas about the importance of home and separate spheres, argued against what they interpreted as the subordination of women's sphere in the outfitting of the farm with labour-saving machinery. Usually farms could not purchase home and farm technologies simultaneously. Those activities of the farm which were seen to be the money-making activities got priority over other improvements. Economic restraints were perhaps realized by rural reformers, but they argued that impediments to reform existed as much in the mind as in the purse. Therefore, ignorance and indifference were also blamed for the continuance of drudgery. Thought and planning were emphasized just as much as the "proper" spending of money.

Although farm women's heavy work load was recognized by reformers, these same interests encouraged farm women to conserve time and energy so that they might use their talents to the benefit of family, community, country and themselves. Leisure for women did not mean laziness or luxury to reformers; it meant devoting more time to being better mothers -- to "home-making" as opposed to "housekeeping." Rural women were encouraged to take part in community activities, to work for community betterment and to be educated as informed citizens. In other words, rural women were expected to fit the mould of progressive women who not only maintained a self-defined separate sphere of labour but who, because of the ability to obtain labour-saving technologies and to engage labour, had the time to extend the activities of their "sphere" outside of the home.[42]

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[42] Rothman, Woman's Proper Place, chapter one.

In accord with their various agendas, contemporary reform interests presented diverse and often conflicting opinions and images of farm women. The greatest contradictions in reform rhetoric concerned their work. The extent of women's responsibilities on the farm was misrepresented, and their work priorities debated. Domestic reformers encouraged farm women's housekeeping and mothering roles, and promoted labour-saving methods so that these roles could be better fulfilled.[43] Women were also the focus of farm improvers. They were supported in their farm work by those concerned with the preservation of farming in Ontario. But, while women's indispensable role on the farm was often touted by rural reformers, their labour was also depreciated by exhortations for them to improve or misrepresented by those who advised them to become involved in areas of work in which they had laboured for years. Rhetoric which emphasized farm women's domestic roles often ignored the extent of their work on the farm. Furthermore, rhetoric that encouraged farm women's work promoted values inconsistent with those of the farm. Independence, both personal and financial, as well as access to luxury items were presented as rewards for their efforts. Farm men were often characterized as experts and women simply as helpers. These values did not reflect the mutuality of effort and modest living that characterized farm life. Contradictory images of farm women's lives emerged. Reform rhetoric both revealed and distorted farm women's work, showing the tension between reality and prescription.

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[43] Domestic science crusaders not only sought to improve farm women's work, but believed training in domestic work offered a possible solution both to the problem of rural depopulation and rural labour shortages, by providing an alternative route for young women who were leaving for the cities. Training in this area was thought to enhance the appeal of domestic work for young farm women, and to provide a much-needed labour supply in the countryside. See Diane Pederson, "'The Scientific Training of Mothers': The Campaign for Domestic Science in Ontario Schools, 1890-1913", in Richard A. Jarrell; Arnold E. Roos, eds. Critical Issues in the History of Canadian Science, Technology and Medicine, Second Conference on the History of Canadian Science, Technology and Medicine, Kingston, Ontario, 1981. (Thornhill: 1983), pp. 184-85. In her study of prairie women, Veronica Strong-Boag argues that feminism in the post-suffrage decades concentrated on assistance to women in the private sphere as women recognized that the crux of women's oppression lay in their heavy responsibilities for work in the home. Veronica Strong-Boag, "Pulling in Double Harness or Hauling a Double Load: Women, Work and Feminism on the Canadian Prairie", Journal of Canadian Studies Volume 21, No. 2 (Summer, 1986), pp. 32-52. Farm women probably welcomed discussion of domestic responsibilities where they were applicable to their situations, but it is important to discern the limits of farm women's and reformers' views of women's "shared oppression."

FARM WOMEN'S REALITIES

In the period 1890-1914 farm women's labour was of great importance to the Ontario farm economy. Their labour was necessary and noticeable in a time of mixed farming and labour shortages, and as their traditional areas of work became the focus of farming. Farm women became the subject of interest of farm reformers and educators. Appreciation of the extent of farm women's work was clouded, however, by concerns about rural depopulation, women's proper sphere, and farm women's appropriate domestic duties as a consequence. Although the rhetoric of farm reformers and educators often challenged farm women's capabilities in farm work, the encouragement and high estimation of women's "farm" work indicated that their efforts were valued and valuable in this period.

Inconsistencies in contemporary rhetoric about farm women reflected increased expectations of women in farm work as well as their domestic work. Those interested in improving the state of farming recognized and encouraged women's farm work in addition to their domestic duties. The farm woman's purchasing responsibilities, her marketing role, and her labour were highlighted in difficult economic times.

In the late nineteenth century, rural Ontario witnessed significant demographic and economic change. With urbanization and the opening of the West, many were leaving rural Ontario. The unavailability of high quality Ontario farm land, the high cost of starting up, and the promises the West offered persuaded many Ontarians to migrate to urban areas and westward.[1] Laments about rural depopulation existed alongside demands for farm labour in contemporary Ontario farm literature.[2] The lack of a reliable, knowledgeable, and hard-working work force was repeatedly deplored. The absence of a permanent labour force was more notable because of the advent of mixed farming. In contrast to wheat farming, which entailed relatively short and intermittent periods of labour-intensive activity, mixed farming called for longer hours and more hands throughout the entire year, due to the variety of crops and animals that required daily, year-round attention[3]:

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[1] See Appendix A.

[2] Because branches of rural industry were declining and re-locating to the cities, and because they believed that labour-saving devices in agriculture necessarily displaced farm labour, contemporary observers and some historians assumed that significant rural depopulation occurred in Ontario in this period. But, between 1871 and 1901, the number of farms in Ontario and Quebec increased thirty per cent and the number of farmers and other agricultural workers increased by twenty-nine per cent. An important

> In nearly every part of Ontario...help is becoming scarce. Good men are not to be had at any price. The great majority of farm laborers to-day [sic] are inexperienced men that a farmer could not afford to keep if the times were not good. There are so many jobs they can't do that a great deal of the heavy drudgery falls upon the farmer..., with the result that they are not only compelled to work too hard, but too long hours as well....Dairy farming has been growing more profitable every year, with the result that a great many farmers are starting dairying. The farmer and his family actively engaged in this pursuit are almost entirely excluded from society....In winter the work on the dairy farm, especially, is just as plentiful as in summer, and perhaps more important.[4]

The shift to mixed farming, evident in Ontario from the 1850's, was in response to the growing demand for livestock and food products in domestic and export markets. Livestock raising, dairying, and fruit and vegetable growing became the focus of Ontario farming. A variety of new crops, products, techniques, equipment and markets accompanied the shift in agricultural production, requiring a wider base of knowledge of farmers. Mixed farming was supported by the scientific community and by farm

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consideration in a discussion of rural depopulation in Ontario is the opening up of new agricultural frontiers and the vacating of non-productive regions for more favourable sites. Robert Bothwell, Ian Drummond, John English, Canada, 1900-1945 (Toronto, 1987), p. 4.

[3] "The more intensive cultivation of livestock demanded new sorts of work, and more regular and intensive work, from the farm families of Ontario and Quebec." Ibid., p. 5. In addition, in the period 1870 to 1910, average cultivated acreage per farm was rising in Ontario. Ibid., p. 4. See Appendix C for statistics of increases in the productivity of certain areas of farming in Bruce and Grey Counties.

[4] "In Defense of the Rising Generation", ***The Farmer's Advocate***, December 27, 1906, p. 2070.

organizations.[5] It was recommended because it reduced reliance on a single product and thus reduced financial risk; it was also considered a safer tactic in a business which was susceptible to fluctuating market prices and unpredictable weather.[6]

The launching of the 'scientific' farming movement accompanying Ontario's move to mixed farming, called for educated, improved methods. Farming was touted as a science and not merely an occupation. It was portrayed as a life work, requiring a great amount of time, energy, and the latest in scientific methods and equipment. In April 1898 C. C. James, Deputy Minister of Agriculture for Ontario, called for education in scientific farming to:

> ...save the agriculture of this Province and the agriculture of Canada from being reduced to the level of cheap lands, cheap labor, and cheap mental calibre....If it is a good thing to educate a grown man or a grown woman in the principles of agricultural work, it is still more important...to give the boy and the girl some

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[5] "Grain crops drain the land of its fertility to a considerable extent, and Canadian farmers now export a very small proportion of such products. The quantities of coarse grains exported from Canada in 1886 were valued at over $16,000,000: while in 1896 their value was only a little over $3,000,000, or about one-fifth of the amount shipped ten years ago. But while we have so largely reduced the quantity of such shipments, we have far more than made up in other exports having added greatly to our exports in other lines of farm produce." The article went on to relate that this farm produce included: "...mostly finished products - cattle, cheese, eggs and butter - and...requir(ing) more skill in their production and manufacture,...have brought us more profit." "Annual Reports of the Butter and Cheese Associations", Sessional Paper No. 24 Sessional Papers, 1897., p. 68.

[6] "Mixed farming is the best sort of farming for this country. It is a poor policy to 'put all your eggs in one basket'. If a man has only one main crop, and the season be unfavourable and his crop a failure, his loss will be a serious one, but if he has a number of different crops he will find that what was unfavourable for one was favourable for another, and he will usually find he has fair returns, no matter what the weather may have been." Ibid. In addition to views that wheat production represented risks that mixed farming did not, the overall change to mixed farming practices has been attributed to falling wheat prices and changes in domestic markets. The transformation from a wheat to a mixed farming economy was not straightforward, however, as the mid to late 1870's witnessed a "mini" wheat boom. See Marvin McInnis, "The Changing Structure of Canadian Agriculture, 1867-1897", Journal of Economic History Volume XLII, No. 1 (March 1982), pp. 191-198.

training in these principles early in life....[7]

The propensity of farm youth to leave the farm and seek work elsewhere, combined with labour shortages and mixed farming practices, meant that farm work in Ontario was not decreasing, but increasing, for those who remained. In addition, a declining birth rate meant fewer potential farm labourers per family unit.[8] This meant a significant burden of work for the Ontario farm family,[9] and continued or even increased work for the typical Ontario farm woman.[10]

The reports of the Bureau of Industries throughout the years 1892 to 1910 indicated that women played an important role in outdoor farm work. These reports continuously lamented the high wages, low quality and scarcity of farm labour and related the measures farmers undertook to counter these conditions. Increased use of machinery and horses and a movement away from crop production to livestock raising was noted. More important, cooperative work among neighbours[11] and by family members offset the necessity for farm labour. In August 1892 the Bureau of Industries reported: "There has been a sufficiency of labor during harvesting, chiefly because farmers are endeavoring [sic] to do as much work as possible within their own families."[12] In May 1897 the Bureau of Industries related that, because of low prices and an inferior labour supply, "Many farmers report that they intend trying this year to do all their work within their own families."[13] In November of the same year the Bureau continued to report: "The farmers have tried as far as possible to do their work within their own families."[14] In 1905 the Bureau described the same trends: "Farmers are having recourse to labor-saving machinery, and endeavouring in this way to keep the work more within their own families."[15] In August 1902 the Bureau related that the scarcity of labour meant, "...it was necessary to get boys to attempt the work...women driving binders, rakes, etc., in order to save the crops..."[16] As late as 1910 it was reported, "In some parts of the province the pressure of spring work has been so strong that farmers' wives and daughters have worked in the fields assisting in getting in the crops."[17] Region was also an important determinant of labour needs. In marginal farming areas such as Bruce and Grey Counties, shared effort and hard work were demanded of all family members.[18] Thus, women's cooperation in farm work was vital.

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[7] "The Report of the Farmers' Institutes", Sessional Paper No. 26 Sessional Papers, 1898., p. 7.

[8] This was due to the increasing ability of families to plan their number of children, a trend towards later marriages and skewed sex ratio in favour of women of marriageable age. See Marjorie Griffin Cohen, Women's Work, Markets and Economic Development in Nineteenth-Century Ontario (Toronto, 1988), p. 122.

[9] The majority of families in rural Ontario at this time was of a nuclear family structure. See A. Gordon Darroch and Michael Ornstein, "Family and Household in Nineteenth Century Canada: Regional Patterns and Regional Economies", Journal of Family History Volume 9, No. 2. (Summer 1984), pp. 158-177.

[10] In his study of Ontario rural depopulation, Young writes: "Families that attempted to keep their land in cultivation often had to put the wives, mothers and daughters of the farm to work in the fields in order to make ends meet. Boys, kept home from school, worked the land with their parents." William Robert Young, "The Countryside On the Defensive: Agricultural Ontario's Views of Rural Depopulation, 1900-1914", M.A. Thesis, University of British Columbia, p. 33.

[11] The November 1904 report of the Bureau noted that "the interchange of work by neighbours" was one means used to meet the "emergencies caused by the shortness of labour." "Report of the Bureau of Industries", Sessional Paper No. 28 Sessional Papers, 1905, p. 18. In 1910 the Bureau recognized that farmers continued to: "exchange help with their neighbours...thus lightening labor." "Report of the Bureau of Industries",

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Sessional Paper No. 45 Sessional Papers, 1910, p. 22.

[12] "Report of the Bureau of Industries", Sessional Papers, 1892., p. 97.

[13] "Report of the Bureau of Industries", Sessional Paper No. 35 Sessional Papers, 1897., p. 125.

[14] Ibid.

[15] The August section of "The Report of the Bureau of Industries" Sessional Paper No. 28 Sessional Papers, 1905., p. 18.

[16] "Report of the Bureau of Industries", Sessional Paper No. 28 Sessional Papers, 1902, p. 18.

[17] The May account of "The Report of the Bureau of Industries", Sessional Paper No. 28, Sessional Papers, 1905, p. 18.

[18] The unfavourable conditions and hard work that characterized farming in Grey County are presented in Nellie McClung, Clearing in the West: An Autobiography (Toronto: 1976). See especially pp. 30-38.

Rising wages for labour and a lack of labour forced farmers to make the best use of available manpower to maintain profits. Increasingly, too, farmers employed labour-saving machinery, especially in the areas of farming they determined produced the most revenue. Limited dispensable income made choices and caution in spending money necessary, especially in regards to equipment for reducing the burden of housework since farm activities were often considered the best potential money-making source. Mechanization was championed in this period as a means to solve the labour shortage problem and to improve the work of the farm family. Machinery did alleviate tedious farm work, but its care and operation did not necessarily mean reduced labour time.[19] If it did[20], more time would be spent on other tasks. The modernization of agriculture, entailing technological development and commercialization, while a process which increased productivity,[21] was not one which necessitated less labour. Increased production on farms with a minimal labour supply required more work per available person.

Two main schools of thought regarding Ontario rural depopulation and farming emerged in contemporary literature.[22] One emphasized the inadequacies faced by agriculture, blaming urban business, government and economic disorder for farming difficulties. A contemporary commented: "...under conditions like ours, it is still true that most men and women must labor and should labor."[23] One of many articles concerned with rural depopulation, entitled, "It is No Wonder that Boys Leave the Farm", contended that "farming does not on the average yield the returns that it should", and as a result "many ultimately give up the unequal struggle". The author related that making ends meet required that farmers, "and their wives as well" exercise the "utmost frugality" which necessitated "their forfeiting many comforts and involves constant, exacting physical labor that places a steady strain on mind and body."[24] Another contemporary commented: "We deplore the inclination of our boys and girls to leave the farm for other callings and professions, but we ought not to expect anything else."[25]

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[19] Bill Reimer, "Farm Mechanization" Canadian Journal of Sociology Volume 9, No. 4. (Fall 1984), pp. 429-443.

[20] The centrifugal cream separator reduced the hours given by women to the task of making butter, but the endless chores of farm work would have occupied any time the cream separator spared them. The heavy task of butter-making and the shortage of domestic labour was noted by a farmer: "As long as a hired girl could be had for $5-6 a month, to make butter, lug milk pans up and down stairs and skim milk out to the barn, we were quite content to do without a separator. Now that we can't get a good girl under $15, we find that the old way is out of the question. We have had a cream separator now for 10 years, sending our cream to a butter factory, and it has been a good investment in more ways than one." ***The Farmer's Advocate***, January 19, 1911, p. 89.

[21] Definition from Francis M. Shaver, "Women, Work and Transformations in Agricultural Production", The Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology, Volume 27, No. 3., (August 1990), p. 343.

[22] Nesmith also identifies two camps in an evaluation of Ontario farming in this period - those who saw improvement as an antidote and those who saw political and economic organization as a cure. T. C. Nesmith, "The Philosophy of Agriculture: The Promise of Intellect in Ontario Farming, 1835-1914" PhD Thesis, Carleton University, 1988.

The other school focused on improved farming methods as a means to improve Ontario farming and to stem the tide of rural depopulation. Men and women, alike, were encouraged in farming. Women's indispensable role in farm life was expressed frequently. One contemporary announced:

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[23] 'The Woman's Right', "Annual Reports of the Butter and Cheese Associations", Sessional Paper No. 24 Sessional Papers, 1897., pp. 20-21.

[24] "It is No Wonder that Boys Leave the Farm", ***Farm and Dairy and Rural Home***, December 14, 1911, p. 4. The author attributed these conditions as causes for rural depopulation in Ontario. He also commented that: "...almost without exception the farmers who are making money are located on naturally productive land that is favourably situated as regards convenience to markets. A far larger proportion of our farmers are working land that for the most part is only fairly good...Many farmers in spite of their best endeavors, [sic] fail to make ends meet and steadily go behind. Many ultimately give up the unequal struggle. These either move into new districts, such as the west, or flock into the cities, seeking such work as they can find." Ibid.

[25] The article went on to compare the earnings of an urban professional and his rural counterpart, the farmer. Five years and an initial investment of $1,500 was seen to yield the professional at least $1,000 a year. The farmer, on the other hand, with a requisite initial investment of $4,000 was portrayed as lucky to earn $200 per annum. The editor commented: "The farmer who dresses his family and lives as most farmers do, keeps a driver and suitable rig or rigs and banks $200 per year, is better off and better paid than the man who lives in the city and receives $1,000 per year as salary." The editor added that $4,000 was a low estimate of necessary working capital for farmers. 'Enlarging the Farm', "The Report of the Farmers' Institutes", Sessional Paper No. 26 Sessional Papers, 1898, pp. 48-49.

> ...I know of no occupation in the world where men and women are such close partners in business as in farm life. The farm and the home cannot be separated.[26]

The work of both men and women was deemed important to the economic well-being of the farm and their co-operation essential to its prosperity. The family needed to work together:

> The farmer's wife by her economy and forethought has no small share in the upbuilding of her husband's fortune. Both husband and wife are active partners in the firm of 'my wife and I'. Your gains are one. Your interests and your losses are one. The young farmer ought to choose a wife who is in sympathy with him in his vocation; then there will be four hands to fight the battles, four eyes to watch for the dangers, and four shoulders to carry the burdens...let there be a thorough understanding between husband and wife on financial matters. The wife should be the husband's confidant in all things. A good, frugal, honest wife is the best help a man can have, as step by step they travel together on the road that is to bring them to a comfortable old age.[27]

Farm women were encouraged in their "farm" work, and also in their domestic duties:

> There are very few subjects which are more interesting or engrossing to the mind of the average farmer's wife and family than that which is termed 'pin money'....the house-wife who, by raking up the fertility of her brain, can devise a scheme however profitable for making money, is indeed a heroine....Whether pin money is scarce or plentiful depends very much upon the kind of a wife the farmer has. One case in mind which illustrates this point is that of a farmer's wife who in her early married life became the possessor of a hand loom, with which she wove

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[26] Miss Martha Van Rensselaer, 'The Farm Home' (presented to an audience at the Ontario Agricultural College and printed in), "The Report of the Farmers' Institutes", Sessional Paper No. 25 Sessional Papers, 1904, pp. 71-73.

[27] Mrs. J. L. Smith, 'A Common-sense Talk to Young Farmers and Their Wives', "The Report of the Farmers' Institutes", Sessional Paper No. 26 Sessional Papers, 1898., pp. 266-269. Another article observed: "In farming, more than in any other calling, can the wife be a help or a hindrance to her husband, so to ensure a success there must be co-operation between them." Mrs. W. M. Shields, 'The Farmer's Wife and Farm Literature', "The Report of the Women's Institutes", Sessional Paper No. 24 Sessional Papers, 1907, p. 102.

> flannel, rag carpets, coverlets, etc., enough to pay the greater part of the price of one hundred acres of land which they had purchased, also the cost of building a large stone house, good barns, and other out-buildings later on in life, besides rearing and educating a numerous family, two of whom were successful school teachers. Her husband was heard to remark that she had made more out of her loom during their life than he had made off the farm....[28]

References to the increased cost of living[29] were repeatedly made and women were urged to economize and resort to home industry instead of relying on bought goods:

> A few years ago living was much cheaper than it is to-day. Cuts of meat which now cost us fifteen or twenty cents could then be purchased for eight to ten cents, and there is a corresponding increase in the price of many other food materials and also in clothing. While a small family cannot purchase to such advantage as a large family, still the thrifty housewife can store her larder with staple foods and secure the more perishable ones by an occasional trip to the market.[30]

Traditional fields of women's work were significant areas of farm production up to 1910.[31] Indeed, by the mid-nineteenth century, the areas of production dominated by women experienced substantial growth due to the shift to mixed farming. Growing markets, especially for garden produce, poultry and dairy products, meant a greater focus on these areas of production by farming interests:

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[28] Mrs. R. Rogers, 'Pin Money On the Farm', "The Report of the Farmers' Institutes", Sessional Paper No. 26 Sessional Papers, 1898., p. 279-280. Use of the term "pin money" to describe money used to purchase household goods, and to help start up farming downplays women's financial role in a society in which the man was supposed to be a good provider, just as the woman was supposed to be, among other things, a loyal helper and good mother. In another article the same author concluded: "So much of the farmer's success depends upon economic housekeeping that we deem it a subject worthy of very serious consideration, especially now when the farmer has to make the very most out of his resources and to economize on every hand to make the proverbial ends meet." Mrs. R. Rogers, 'Economic Housekeeping on the Farm', "The Report of the Farmers' Institutes", Sessional Paper No. 26 Sessional Papers, 1898, pp. 276-277.

[29] In his study of rural depopulation in Ontario, Young posits that along with mechanization and higher wages, the labour shortage generated a higher cost of living. Young, "The Countryside on the Defensive", p. 11.

[30] Miss Bertha A. Duncan, 'Household Expenses', "Report of the Women's Institutes", Sessional Paper No. 24 Sessional Papers, 1907, p. 63.

[31] See Appendix C.

> The uncertainty of the products of the farm these days demands that the farmer employ every agency at his command to augment its returns, and among the many things that belongs legitimately to the farm there is nothing that promises as much and as quick returns as poultry-keeping. In fact the change of circumstances and the new demands which the growth and proximity of large cities bring, have almost revolutionized the old mode of farming by wheat-raising. Market-gardening, fruit-growing, dairying and swine-raising are now the leading lines of farming; and as a supplement to these branches of farm produce there is nothing that the farmer employs to increase his returns so profitably and quickly as poultry-keeping....[32]

Men were addressed as 'managers' of traditionally female occupations when these areas became a focus of farm work and financial return.[33] To verify the importance of certain farm occupations, associations were formed and 'scientific' management touted. Farm associations formed by men spoke primarily to men about areas of farm specialization[34]. Fields such as poultry-raising were looked upon as a serious part of farming, for the consideration of men:

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[32] Walter Pelps, 'Poultry-keeping as an Aid to Farming', "The Report of the Farmers' Institutes", Sessional Paper No. 26 Sessional Papers, 1898., p. 252. The prevalence of home dairies was notable in this period: "...I am not in any sense attempting to boom the private dairy in opposition to the large public creamery; for I believe that where such is within easy reach, it will in many cases be more profitable to the farmer to have his milk handled there, especially if help is scarce on the farm or if he be not easily accessible to a good market. But thousands of farmers are, and will be for some time to come, not within reach of either creameries or cheese factories. For many of these there would be profit in this home dairy business if undertaken in a business-like way." "The Report of the Farmers' Institutes", Sessional Paper No. 26 Sessional Papers, 1898, p. 214.

[33] Cohen found that the productive work of women was taken over by men when it became a primary focus and source of market items (patriarchal control of significant means of production). Cohen, Women's Work, p. 40-45. Marvin McInnis also identifies a tendency for women's work to pass into the hands of men in the areas of dairying, vegetable growing and poultry raising. McInnis concludes that: "Overall, through the latter half of the nineteenth century, farming in Ontario offered, in a relative sense, a diminishing opportunity for remunerative work by women." He also finds it "hard to conceive" housework -- to which he sees farm women limited -- "expanding to an extent that would have substituted fully for the relative diminution of farm work." R. Marvin McInnis, "Women, Work and Childbearing: Ontario in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century", Histoire Sociale: Social History Volume 24, No. 48 (November 1991), p. 250.

> I feel somewhat more confidence in talking to an audience of farmers on the subject of poultry keeping than I should two or three years ago, because I am satisfied that more of them are beginning to look upon it as a serious part of the farm economy, and not merely a side issue to be left to the women and children.[35]

Even when such industries were important before, his control was deemed necessary:

> The Canadian farmer hardly realizes that his farm is the greatest source of supply of eggs and poultry in this country. He knows that his wife gathers periodically a number of eggs from the hens that run around and lay, here, there and everywhere: and that he obtains a few cents a dozen for them when he has occasion to attend the market town. As for going to market solely to dispose of his eggs and poultry, nothing is further from his mind, simply because he does not realize the importance of the industry.[36]

The organizations for horticulture, bee-keeping, dairying, poultry and stock raising were male-oriented and "scientific". But women continued to participate in these and other areas of farm production, as indicated by contemporary sources, including newspapers, Institute articles and even the agricultural associations themselves. Although the various farm produce organizations and agricultural institutions of Ontario were dominated by men, and expressly addressed men of the farms, acknowledgement of women's role in production was repeatedly made.

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[34] A small sample of the multitude of Ontario agricultural associations formed in this period include: The Butter and Cheese Associations of the Province of Ontario, The Ontario Poultry Associations, The Dairymen's Association of the Province of Ontario, The Ontario Horticulture Association, The Dominion Cattle Breeders Association, The Dominion Sheep Breeders Association, The Dominion Swine Breeders Association, The Ontario Horse Breeders Association, The Beekeepers Association of Ontario, The Corn Growers Association of Ontario, The Fruit Growers Association of Ontario, The Vegetable Growers Association of Ontario, and The Provincial Winter Fairs Association of Ontario. These examples were taken from Sessional Papers, 1910.

[35] C. W. Young, 'Practical Poultry-Keeping', "The Report of the Farmers' Institutes", Sessional Paper No. 26 Sessional Papers, 1898., p. 250.

[36] Robert H. Essex, 'Poultry Pointers for the Farmer', "The Report of the Farmers' Institutes", Sessional Paper No. 26 Sessional Papers, 1898., p. 245.

While women's "control" of certain areas of farm work may have been supplanted by men, their work continued in these areas, which may or may not have grown in scale due to the demands of a mixed farming economy.[37] The capability of farm women in their traditional areas of work could not be dismissed and their continuing role in these occupations was recognized, however indirectly. Women's efforts in farm work were understood by educators, who promoted their education in these areas, just as they endorsed farm education for men:[38]

> There are many interests about the farm which are closely connected with the domestie [sic] work of the thrifty housewife, and latterly their commercial value has made them highly important factors in adding to the financial returns from the working of the farm. Such adjuncts as dairying, poultry and bee-keeping, the preservation of vegetables and fruits, stock-raising, etc. The foregoing are yearly becoming more and more profitable features of the work, and the wife can, with most successful results, aid her husband's endeavours in this direction. But, in order that she may prove a help rather than a hindrance, she must have some

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[37] In her article "Women, Work and Agricultural production" Shaver identifies various schools of thought regarding women and agricultural modernization. One sees the displacement of women and the masculinization of agriculture. Another maintains that women's input varies with the evolution of agriculture; that modernization may deprive women of their supervisory and decision-making roles; that the relegation of women to the role of housewife may occur, especially in large, established grain operations; or that the maintenance and accentuation of women's productive input may occur, especially in small, diversified enterprises. In her 1990 study of contemporary Canadian farms, Shaver concludes that on semi-capitalist farms, (where capitalist agriculture entails the separation of labour and capital, replacement of non-paid labour with paid labour and the segregation of manual tasks from supervisory, decision-making ones) modernization reduces women's agricultural workload while increasing their domestic work. On family labour farms, (farms characterized by non-capitalist relations of production) modernization tends to maintain, if not increase women's contribution to farm work. Shaver, "Women, Work and Transformations", p. 343. See also Linda Graff, "The Changing Nature of Farm Women's Work Roles Under the Industrialization of Agricultural Production", M.A. Thesis, McMaster University, 1979.

[38] The development of agricultural education is described by Nesmith, "The Philosophy of Agriculture."

> scientific knowledge of the work in hand.[39]

Not only did reform rhetoric suggest that a serious undertaking of farm work meant a man's focus, it also indicated that expertise was essential. Women's farm work was expected to conform to higher standards and scientific procedures.

When the education of women in farm work was promoted, the presence of women in "farm" work was revealed, encouraged and legitimized by the scientific community. The education of farm women in their work was seen as beneficial to the farm unit as a whole. Woman's success in dairying, stock-raising, chicken-raising, bee-keeping et cetera was associated with: "...using both her brain and her commonsense." She was advised to: "keep in touch with literature" to excel in these areas of farm work.[40]

Contemporary articles frequently addressed both men and women in fields of farm labour, such as in the dairy industry:

> In Canada we need those who combine thinking and working. The dairy industry especially, needs such persons. He or she who deals with animal life and animal products needs a more liberal education and more skill....If you are making butter in the home dairy, you will receive lessons in setting and skimming milk, operating hand cream-separators, churning and printing butter. A week or more could be

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[39] Cited from an article dated August 13, 1898 from the ***Woodstock Sentinel Review*** in 'Women Make A Departure: The Farmers' Wives of Wentworth Form an Institute', "Report of the Farmers' Institutes", Sessional Paper No. 26 Sessional Papers, 1898., pp. xxiii-xxiv.

[40] "The daily and weekly papers contain many paragraphs which are very useful. There also are magazines entirely devoted to the work of the farm: for instance, the Farmer's Advocate, the Farming World, the Weekly Sun, the Canadian Dairyman, the Poultry Review, etc. Besides, there are innumerable reports and bulletins issued periodically by the Dominion Experimental Farm at Ottawa, and the Agricultural College at Guelph." Shields, 'The Farmer's Wife and Farm Literature', "Report of the Women's Institutes", Sessional Paper No. 24 Sessional Papers, 1907., pp. 102-103.

profitably spent by many farmers' wives and daughters.[41]

The tendency of farm women to reject education in a field in which they had laboured successfully for years was recognized by educators who respectfully acknowledged their accomplishments.[42] The scientific and complex nature of farm work was emphasized in order to promote its instruction. In his address to the Butter and Cheese Associations, Professor H. H. Dean, of the Ontario Agricultural College, related:

> Last Saturday night a neat, tidy little woman came into our dairy room and said: 'I have a sample of butter here I would like you to examine. I have been supplying Mr. Anderson, the grocer, for four or five years, but now it has gone off flavour. I do not blame him for not taking it, for I would not eat it myself. What is the matter with it?' I examined the sample carefully. The butter was well made, but it was bad in flavour. She left me a sample of the cream, and it was sweet; but when I came to ripen it, I found it had developed that bad flavour. I found the probable source of the difficulty. Certain ferments had got into the cream in the first place, and so the thing was being propagated by the starter taken from the cream. We gave her some of our good starter to put into the cream, and I think she will have a good sample of butter after this.[43]

Educators were important promoters of women's farm work. Professor Dean advised that women should do the milking on the farm: "...it is most profitable when women milk, because they are more gentle than men, and cows respond to gentleness with more milk." He also recommended that farm women teach milking.[44]

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[41] Professor H. H. Dean, (professor of Dairy Husbandry at the Ontario Agricultural College) 'A Dairy Education', "The Report of the Farmers' Institutes", Sessional Paper No. 26 Sessional Papers, 1898., pp. 190-92. The article also recommended: "The lectures on poultry are valuable to the home dairy student." Ibid.., p. 192.

[42] "No farmer would go to the expense of buying a binder if he thought he would not be a gainer by so doing. Neither are factory men nor dairy maids going to take a course at a dairy school without seeing where they, too, will be benefitted. Many people believe that a dairy school is a place in which to learn to make butter, ...as they have made...for years....I am talking to the wives and daughters of our farm homes." 'What a Dairy School Course Means', "The Report of the Farmers' Institutes", Sessional Paper No. 26 Sessional Papers, 1898., p. 192. Three dairy schools were established by this time - in Strathroy, Kingston and Guelph.

[43] 'Science and Practice in Dairying', "Annual Reports of the Butter and Cheese Associations", Sessional Paper No. 24, Sessional Papers, 1898., p. 22.

The presence of women in dairying was confirmed by the acceptance and high estimation of women such as Miss Laura Rose and Mrs. E. M. Jones who both wrote manuals and articles on dairying and lectured on the subject.[45] In a presentation to the Farmers' Institute, Mrs. Jones related:

> My whole life has been spent in dairying, and, after struggling through untold difficulties, I have attained a great success and I want others to share it....Mr. Hodson wants me to tell how I raise and care for these cows and I am glad to do so because I think it will put money in your pockets, that is what we all want.[46]

Women's influence in poultry-raising was also recognized. In an address to a Women's Institute the presenter acknowledged that she was unsure whether she could add anything 'new' to farm women's knowledge of the field. She advised farm women to keep up with the latest scientific methods and discussed poultry-raising as a commercial venture:

> I have been requested to tell you what I know about the raising and feeding of poultry. I do not know whether I can tell you anything new or anything that you do not know, but as each one of us must do her part, I shall endeavor to give you briefly a few points that I know from personal experience....The poultry interest has made vast strides during the past few years, and many persons are making a business of it. Formerly it was chiefly in the hands of the farmer's wife or daughter, and the farmer himself did not consider it worthy of his attention. But times have changed now, and with a good market not only for eggs but also for dressed poultry, the farmer's wife sees she must keep up with the times or fail.

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[44] "The Report of the Farmers' Institutes", Sessional Paper No. 25 Sessional Papers, 1902., p. 71.

[45] Mrs. Laura Rose Stephen (nee Miss Laura Rose) was a well known author and lecturer of the Guelph Dairy School, and often spoke to various farm organizations, especially the Farmers' and Women's Institutes.

[46] 'The Cow and Her Care', "The Report of the Farmers' Institutes", Sessional Paper No. 26 Sessional Papers, 1898, p. 131.

> Hence she tries to find out the best breeds both for eggs and for table use.[47]

Farm women were occupied with domestic duties in the home - cleaning, cooking and caring for children, but their duties were not limited to these areas. Women were engaged in dairying, poultry and bee-keeping, the preservation of vegetables and fruits, gardening, stock-raising[48] and field work. The following excerpt revealed what a farmer's daughter included among the responsibilities of her peers:

> I can see a great distinction between city and country girls, and I must say that city girls are unfit for the wives of farmers, on account of their ignorance of country work in general; but every country girl should know how to milk, spin, bake, etc. Farmers' daughters should be industrious, economical housekeepers, should understand all the etceteras of milk, butter, cheese, spinning, sewing, &c, and so should every country girl, whether her father is a blacksmith, weaver, or whatever his calling may be.[49]

Farm women set examples for their daughters:

> Accustomed to a busied life, the mother has not lessened her sphere of usefulness. While her neighbor [sic] is wasting his time in talking up politics, or in other futile pastimes in the market or in the saloons, she busies herself with perusing her agricultural paper and applying the knowledge thus acquired to

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[47] Mrs. James Bogue, 'The Raising of Poultry' in "The Report of the Farmers' Institutes", Sessional Paper No. 25 Sessional Papers, 1902, pp. 106-107. This lecture was given by Mrs. Bogue to various Women's Institutes.

[48] Farm women were supported in this aspect of farm work: "Do not bring the young women up with the idea that there is something vulgar and unwomanly about taking an interest in the stock on the farm....If that great Queen, (Victoria) who made England's Court the purest in the world by her life and example, did not consider these noble animals beneath her notice, it ill becomes the women of Ontario to pose as prudes and disclaim any concern about them." 'The Young Woman On the Farm', "Report of the Women's Institutes", Sessional Paper No. 24 Sessional Papers, 1909., p. 44.

[49] Letter to the editor from "Jennie", ***The Canada Farmer***, July 15, 1867, p. 222. Another article also revealed what a contemporary viewed as appropriate education for farm daughters: "Teach the daughters to make their work a pleasure instead of a task, and they would find it far easier to do, by so doing. Get them interested in house work, also out door [sic] work, such as taking care of poultry or helping look after a bit of garden or flower beds...." "How to Keep the Country Girl on the Farm", ***Canadian Farm***, March 10, 1911., p. 3.

> profitable occupations in the garden or field....[50]

A farmer's wife asserted that, besides the duties of housekeeping and motherhood, if a woman was healthy, it was: "...her duty to help milk, or even to do it all in haying and harvest; to tend the poultry, and help with the garden."[51]

Contemporary accounts esteemed women's success in farm work. Reporting on the success of one farm, all of the credit for the prize-winning poultry was given to a Mrs. Bell, whose husband was: "...proud of his wife's success in the chicken business and regards her poultry as one of the most profitable departments on the farm."[52] But the literature also portrayed farm women, beautifully attired in white, standing in the middle of a poultry yard feeding chickens from their hands. Poultry work, portrayed as "a serious part of the farm economy", was also depicted as "nice", "easy" work -- suitable for women. It was recommended as a means to obtain the nice things that so appealed to women and as work which freed women to attend to social functions.[53]

Such rhetoric revealed an understanding of a farm woman's lifestyle that was not reflective of the norm for Ontario farm women. Farm women often could not afford to buy luxury items; money they made from such things as poultry-raising, gardening and dairying was used to maintain the household. Further, these women often did not have time to attend social functions. The intimation that "even women" could take care of poultry was misrepresentative of the laborious tasks farm women performed daily, and undermined their capability. In fact, most Ontario farm women were in charge of the poultry in this period, which was often hard and dirty work, and not as "nice" or as "easy" as the article suggested.

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[50] "Women Farmers: Where are They?", ***The Farmer's Advocate***, September 1884, p. 260.

[51] Letter to the editor entitled "The Woman On the Farm" from 'A Farmer's Wife'(Lincoln County), ***The Farmer's Advocate***, June 3, 1909, p. 927.

[52] "A Successful Poultry Woman", ***Farm and Dairy and Rural Home***, October 5, 1911, p. 12.

[53] Women's farm work was often also disparaged and misrepresented. A newspaper article commented: "We were somewhat surprised that Mrs. Jull could care for such a large flock of hens in addition to caring for her household duties..." The same article recommended poultry work to farm women, as if it were unfamiliar to them. "Ready Money Representing Real Profit Made by a Woman", Ibid., p. 1.

More accurate depictions of farm women's work could be found in agricultural reform rhetoric which emphasized women's financial responsibilities.[54]

> Of women folks on farms there can be no doubt as to the supreme influence they wield! They are in daily touch with the whole farm business. They do much of the marketing and the buying....Women folks on farms almost invariably have money of their own. The produce from the poultry, the dairy, or the bees - all of it, or some large part of it, is usually theirs.[55]

The economic times were a factor in the emphasis upon women and financial responsibility: "Money, whether for pins or provisions, is now-a-days getting to be almost an unknown quantity...."[56] Women were encouraged to continue and expand their money-making activities which were essential to the success of the farm. Women's "farm" work was often the source of income for the household expenses which were their responsibility:

> If the family is not very large, a good smart house-keeper, [sic] who keeps, say from four to six cows and between thirty and forty hens, should, with the proceeds, not only keep the family in groceries, but also provide considerable of the clothing linen as well, so that there is no store bill for the husband to pay after he sells the grain.[57]

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[54] "The work of those who manage the home has to do with food and clothing, with pure air and cleanliness, with health and sickness, with earning and spending and saving." Miss E. Nash, 'Economy in the Home', "The Report of the Farmers' Institutes", Sessional Paper No. 26 Sessional Papers, 1898., p. 278.

[55] ***Farm and Dairy and Rural Home***, October 10, 1912, p. 17.

[56] Rogers, 'Pin Money On the Farm', "The Report of the Farmers' Institutes", Sessional Paper No. 26 Sessional Papers, 1898, p. 279.

[57] Mrs. J. L. Smith, 'A Talk On Domestic Economy', "The Report of the Farmers' Institutes", Sessional Paper No. 26 Sessional Papers, 1898., p. 272. A lady with whom the author was well acquainted was successful in these terms: "...from the product of five

Farm women commonly provided the food and clothing for their families out of the products and proceeds from certain areas of their farm work as well as from their labour in sewing and textile production. Women's obligations exceeded these contributions, however. They also often provided money for taxes and fuel, and entertainment.[58] Some provided the capital necessary for the outfitting of the farm.[59]

Recognized as household financiers, women were also encouraged to apply business methods to their work:

> In country...homes, there are many who have poultry, milk, butter, vegetables and fruit for sale. Would it not be well to have an account book - it does not cost much - and enter every item in connection with cost of production and proceeds from same, in order that she may know the exact profits? If the account indicates a loss, let her look to some one who has experience along that line of production, that she may turn the path of failure into one of success. Be businesslike. If the living expenses of the home must be met by the efforts of the housewife in her

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cows and between thirty and forty hens she purchases all the clothing for herself, her husband and two children, provides all the household linen and all the family groceries for a family of five (she boards the hired man) besides occasionally taking an outing, and, she added I have often a surplus - at present I have twenty dollars." Ibid., p. 273. In 1909 "A Farmer's Wife" considered that women's efforts in poultry-tending and butter-making should: "...provide all eatables that do not grow on the farm, and clothe the wife and children under the age of twelve." 'The Woman on the Farm' (letter to the Editor from "A Farmer's Wife"), ***The Farmer's Advocate***, June 3, 1909., p. 927.

[58] One contemporary article acknowledged: "It is often puzzling to know just how the housewife can plan and economize to make a small income meet the multiplicity of household expenses, and thus keep her home out of debt. Even though the house is free of debt there is still food, clothing, fuel, service, taxes, church expenses, an occasional trip or a good concert, all of which may be justly included in the expense account of a well ordered family." Duncan, 'Household Expenses', "The Report of the Women's Institutes", Sessional Paper No. 24 Sessional Papers, 1907., p. 62.

[59] "...in the early days when she and her husband first purchased the worn-out farm it was the money that she made peddling fresh vegetables and the cash that she made from their poultry that gave them their first start. She was an excellent butter maker, and the reputation she obtained for her butter was the chief factor of building up a large and profitable dairy industry on the farm." ***Farm and Dairy and Rural Home***, October 5, 1911, p. 8. The extent of women's contributions to the farm were not limited to the areas of work which provided financial return. Their labour in the home and on the farm just as often yielded no monetary value.

> garden, dairy, etc. ...some estimate of the value of these should be made in the expense account....By economy and good management we can derive the best results with the least expenditure of time, money and energy. The woman who studies food values and economies and applies them scientifically, who keeps her entire household expenses within her income, makes home free of debt, is happy and self-reliant, is lifting the standard of her nation.[60]

When women economized, and did things in "in the right way and in the right time" they were promised better results and more leisure.[61] Promotion of women's work on the farm also promised interest, independence, and financial reward:

> For women can be recommended the dairy, the garden, the poultry. Than these there is no more sure source of independence existing for the women of to-day.[62]

In an article entitled "Women In Agriculture Are Surrounded With Brilliant Possibilities" a farm journal commented that the sentiment: "What can I do! I am only a woman" had long since passed away:

> Nowadays there are many attractive lines of farm work quite suitable for women and at which women are succeeding, making for themselves an interesting life-work and accumulating a desirable income and profit. The most popular endeavor for women in agriculture is poultry keeping; it is also one of the best - in many ways superior to all others. Our illustration shows Miss Bessie Main, a young woman who has charge of a large dairy and looks after 200 laying hens....[63]

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[60] Duncan, 'Household Expenses', "Report of the Women's Institutes", Sessional Paper No. 24 Sessional Papers, 1907, pp. 62-64.

[61] Smith, 'A Talk On Domestic Economy', "The Report of the Farmers' Institutes", Sessional Paper No. 26 Sessional Papers, 1898, pp. 272-276.

[62] Dr. Annie L. Backus, Elgin Co., Ontario quoted in ***Farm and Dairy and Rural Home***, October 5, 1911, p. 16. Farm work for women, such as gardening and poultry raising was also defended on grounds that it was enjoyable work, not demanding or "hard", allowing for leisure time. See "Ready Money Representing Real Profit Made By A Woman" Ibid., p. 1.

[63] ***Farm and Dairy and Rural Home***, October 5, 1911., p.1.

Though deprecating the extent to which women already engaged in such endeavours, such commentary was intended to encourage women in farm work. It also raised concerns about the financial dependence of farm women, offering ways for them to make their own money. Headlines like: "How Shall the Income Be Apportioned"[64] indicated a concern with women's limited financial resources on the farm. Discrepancies between farm women's important economic contribution and their reward were often lamented.[65] The acknowledgement of women's economic role and their right to share financial decisions with their husbands were sometimes presented as appropriate rewards for women's work.[66]

The encouragement of financial independence for women was seen as a means to keep women on farms. Women who left the farm and sought employment in urban areas enjoyed a measure of financial control and independence that could not be found on farms.[67] Often what reformers advocated for farm women revealed an appreciation for the advantages that urban life and work offered young women who left.[68] Concern for farm women's individuality, responsibility, and recognition of their influence and importance on the farm was expressed. Time for leisure and pleasure, consideration in financial matters and a measure of autonomy were recommended.[69]

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[64] ***Farm and Dairy and Rural Home***, October 9, 1913, p. 7.

[65] See for example Mrs. J. E. Caldwell, 'A True Partnership Basis', ***Farm and Dairy and Rural Home***, October 9, 1913, p. 7.

[66] "My husband and I each have our own pocketbook. I have all the proceeds of the butter and poultry, and with this I keep the house in groceries and home linen and clothe myself and children. When I have not enough, my husband gives me what I need if he has it; if not, I go without. If he needs money and I have it, I give it to him. We think the woman has a much right to the handling of the money as the man." Letter to the editor by Mrs. Thos. McGin (of Grey County) Ibid.

[67] Alan A. Brookes, and Catharine A. Wilson, "'Working Away' from the Farm: The Young Women of North Huron, 1910-30", Ontario History Volume LXXVII, No. 4. (December 1985), pp. 281-300.

[68] Brookes and Wilson identify the following as the benefits perceived by farm women in their experiences working off the farm: fun and excitement; independence, (especially financial); increased self-esteem, more opportunity and experience and self-knowledge. "'Working Away' from the Farm" Ontario History, pp. 299-300.

It is clear that farm women of the late nineteenth century were of significant interest to farm reformers. Those interested in the improvement of Ontario agriculture recognized and encouraged women's abilities in farm work. Farm women's contributions were noticeable because of the nature of mixed farming and because their efforts were vital in marginal farming areas and in times of economic difficulty and labour shortages. Women needed to contribute economically to farming. They were encouraged to work more efficiently and to try new and prosperous lines of work. This period did not see a decrease of women's productive work nor their relegation to the domestic sphere. Farm women as were involved as ever in traditional farm occupations such as dairying, poultry-raising, bee-keeping, gardening, marketing et cetera. Farm reformers encouraged women's participation in these roles to help preserve their real economic contribution to the farm:

> You know a farm home cannot be complete without a woman. A farmer without a wife cannot get along at all. We might imagine a man getting along in any other position without a wife, but not on a farm.[70]

Contemporary ideas about womanliness were adapted by rural women to suit their own realities; they accepted those that fit, and rejected those that did not.[71] Farm women's lives did not fit the socially-constructed ideology of gender based on two separate spheres. Farm women engaged in both farm and housework; they cooked, raised chickens and worked in the fields. The attributes of hard work, cooperation and selflessness were prized by the rural community and women were supported in their farm work. Contemporary sources reveal that farm women encouraged education, recreation, and recognition for their daughters, reflecting the things they desired themselves. Relief from hard work was never advocated, however.

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[69] "To develop strong characters we must give them independence. Let the young women have some definite source of income. The chickens, the garden, the cows, any of these might be given to her charge, a certain portion from their income being hers to do with as she will. This would help in developing self-reliance, and give a grounding in the knowledge of the value of money, and how to spend it." Dr. A. Backus, 'The Young Woman On the Farm', "Report of the Women's Institutes", Sessional Paper No. 24 Sessional Papers, 1909, pp. 45-46.

[70] "The Report of the Farmers' Institutes", Sessional Paper No. 25 Sessional Papers, 1904., p. 44.

[71] Hagler identifies similar modifications of the lady ideal by the farm community in the antebellum South to suit the realities of farm women there. D. Harland Hagler, "The Ideal Woman in the Antebellum South: Lady or Farmwife?" The Journal of Southern History Volume XLVI, No. 3 (August 1980), pp. 405-418.

Farm women usually did not have the opportunity to partake of the many entertainments that maternal feminists enjoyed and urged upon them.[72] Farm women responded to calls that they "should have sufficient free time and strength so that...(they) may serve the community by participating in its vital affairs"[73] by asserting they did not have time to engage in such pursuits:

> We women from the country are too busy with the duties that require our constant attention to be able to form deputations to wait on the Ministry and ask formally for the franchise....[74]

Farm women's feminism did not fit easily with the mainstream of the women's movement in Canada, dominated as it was by urban middle-class women with dissimilar goals. Nor did farm women identify with the goals of the rural elite. They claimed their own distinct sphere of influence. Agrarian feminism included the recognition of the partnership of women and men on the family farm:

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[72] "The average woman has her time more than occupied with the multitudinous duties of her surroundings, and finds but little if any leisure for entertainment or culture." Miss Laura Rose, 'Women's Institutes', "Report of the Farmers' Institutes", Sessional Papers, 1898, p. 263.

[73] "Woman's Work on the Farm", ***Farm and Dairy and Rural Home***, February 2, 1911., p. 22.

[74] ***Farm And Dairy and Rural Home***, December 14, 1911, p. 14. In an earlier comment, a farm woman articulated the belief that these activities were of no interest to her peers: "We have no sympathy with the Women's Rights movement. The rights of a good woman are the love and respect of her husband and children, and she can best secure that love and respect by (doing)...their duty well in that sphere of life in which it has pleased God to place them." Mrs. Robert Warwick, "Women as Farmers" (a prize essay), ***The Farmer's Advocate***, November 1884., p. 332.

> Both at home and abroad, in the east and in the west, I have seen women at work in the meadow, the vineyard, the orchard, the harvest field - cheerfully, willingly helping the men at times when all hands seemed necessary to safely garner the crops....When the few extra busy days come the women give their aid, nor do they mind it for they have been used to so doing since girlhood.[75]

According to prescriptive literature, woman's sphere comprised the domestic duties of women, including child-rearing, cooking, cleaning, and health care. Farm women and farm reformers accommodated this limited definition by extending the meaning of "domestic work" outside of the home. Women's work in poultry-raising, dairying and gardening became associated with the home because the home was considered their sphere of work on the farm. Even though this work was, essentially, farm work, it was not regarded as such. "Farm work" was men's work. Rhetoric was used to accommodate reality with expectation.

The attributes of womanliness deemed incompatible with the qualities of farm women were often criticized.[76] A contemporary condemned the inclination of farmer's daughters to favour the characteristics of the upper classes and to choose marriage to doctors and teachers over farmers:

> They secure the man of their choice by their 'mincing' manner and 'accomplishments;' perhaps they 'play the piano,' or smatter French, gossip, read novels and discuss the latest style of the fashions; but this is the height of their attainments. Don't mention such vulgar things as cooking, dairying, or any general household work, for it is likely they would go into hysterics.[77]

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[75] "The Division of Labour on the Farm", ***Farm and Dairy & Rural Home***, October 9, 1913., p. 4.

[76] In her work Wedded to the Cause: Ukrainian-Canadian Women and Ethnic Identity, 1891-1991 (Toronto: 1993), Frances Swyripa looks at Ukrainian women's experiences with urban influences. Like Ontario's agricultural community, the Ukrainian community reacted negatively to such influences upon its younger generation, fearing the loss of a way of life. See especially chapter two, "Jeopardizing the Future: Alienated and Rebellious Daughters."

[77] From a letter to the editor entitled "Hints to Farmer's Daughters" ***The Canada Farmer***, June 01, 1867, p. 168.

Entertaining, reading novels and playing piano were portrayed as too high-minded, and as a waste of time.[78] Education was also potentially threatening. Boarding schools and colleges were blamed for educating farm girls:

> ...to a life of idleness, flirtation, and gayety [sic] causing them to avoid everything which they deem drudgery...(leading them) astray from the love of home and rural occupation, into gay and frivolous society.[79]

The qualities of womanhood valued by farm women reflected the hard work that farm life demanded of them. A contemporary asserted:

> In every sphere of life how powerful is the influence and example of woman! But nowhere is her influence so widely felt as in farm life, so many possibilities of success or failure lie beneath her hands; and she who avoids the duties and responsibilities incumbent upon her, is lacking in energy and sympathy, which detract from her true womanliness.[80]

A farm woman, she continued: "...need not forfeit any real essential of womanly character by...being a farmer at heart."[81]

That the majority of farm women aspired above all else to the life of domesticity encouraged by reformers, or considered their life one of drudgery was unlikely. One farm woman related that:

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[78] See "The Daughter's Portion", ***The Farmer's Advocate***, February 25, 1904., p. 276; and "Selfish Girls", ***Farm and Dairy and Rural Home***, February 13, 1913, p. 181. These are only two of many articles which reject values deemed incompatible with farm life.

[79] "Why Farmers' Daughters Despise Farm Life, and some of the Remedies", ***The Canada Farmer***, July 15, 1867, p. 222.

[80] Warwick, "Women as Farmers", ***The Farmer's Advocate***, November 1884, p. 332. In an October 1913 issue ***Farm and Dairy*** also articulated this sentiment: "The farm business at its best requires the cooperation of a man and a woman whose interests are one and who work together in all things." ***Farm and Dairy and Rural Home***, October 9, 1913., p. 14.

[81] Ibid.

> ...I do think that the place of the woman upon the farm is just, in the main, what a woman wants it to be. There are exceptions, it is true; but I am speaking generally. See a farmer's wife make a practice of milking cows, feeding calves, etc., and it is safe money to bet that she wants to do it. It may be that she is fond of that sort of work, or maybe likes to feel she is helping; but whatever her motive, depend upon it she wants to do it.[82]

Keeping women on the farms was a concern of the rural population: "Send the girls to school by all means, but keep them in love with the farm home."[83] Farm life was depicted as moral, uplifting, happy and healthy. "...Wholesome food, fresh air, immunity from doubtful companionship, and all the exercise they wish to take"[84] were some advantages of country life held up to farm women. The farmwife ideal recalled an older tradition. The accomplishments of pioneer women were often lauded:

> There was scarcely a family want, whether of victuals or covering, but was supplied by the busy hand and through the never-wearying care of our mothers. And yet they still tell us that those were the proudest and happiest days of their lives.[85]

More important, the farmwife ideal was analogous to the realities of life for thousands of contemporary farm women. The farm community urged, therefore, not only the return to an older ideal, but an appreciation of farm women of the day.

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[82] Mrs. T. H. Bass, "The Woman On the Farm", ***The O.A.C. Review***, 1912., p. 560.

[83] 'The Young Woman On the Farm', "Report of the Women's Institutes", Sessional Paper No. 24 Sessional Papers, 1909., p. 43.

[84] "Girls and Farm Life", ***The Farmer's Advocate***, July 01, 1893, p. 253.

[85] "Women Farmers: Where are They?", ***The Farmer's Advocate***, September 1884, p. 260.

CONCLUSION

This thesis examines both the images and the work experiences of Ontario farm women during the years 1890 to 1914. In this period farm women encountered an abundance of prescriptive literature defining their roles. Although women were encouraged to make an important contribution to the success of the farm, often, their farm work was ignored or downplayed in favour of their domestic and maternal responsibilities. They were encouraged to enjoy more leisure time, to employ labour-saving devices, and to influence their families to become better educated and cultured.

The main source of such advice was the rural elite which supported rural reform, one aspect of the larger social reform movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Agrarian reformers sought to improve farming and to keep families on farms. In their promotion of agriculture, reformers encouraged roles and behaviours more in accordance with town than rural life. According to the rural elite, farm men and women were to occupy separate spheres of work and influence, and farming was to reflect the highest scientific and business-like standards.

The agendas of the rural elite mirrored separate gender realities. Women's Institutes reflected maternal feminist goals and farm journals advocated appropriate activities for farm women. Both emphasized gender rather than class in defining women's role on the farm. Farming in this period was a family affair, requiring hard work and cooperative effort. Although a basic division of labour did exist, these divisions were often blurred as mutuality of effort was essential to the prosperity of farming. In addition, the limited financial returns of farmers and farm survival strategies such as saving and "making do" were largely ignored by the rural elite who consistently urged the latest in labour-saving technology and luxury items.

Although agrarian reformers promoted a sphere of womanhood that restricted farm women's interests and influence to the home, the realities of farm women's lives are revealed by their own accounts and by inconsistencies in reform rhetoric. What emerges is an image of farm women occupied with both household and farm work; women who had little leisure and few luxuries. When they found time to comment about their work, farm women did not identify themselves as homemakers, but as farmers. Thus, farm women did not identify with the reform programmes of the rural elite.

World War I marked a crisis for Ontario farm families. Accelerated rural depopulation and increased agricultural production for the war effort, in spite of the loss of farmers' sons and farm labour, meant that work of women was more crucial to the prosperity of farming and there was a heightened awareness of their role. The war also marked the high point of maternal feminism with the success of prohibition and then women's suffrage. Women were rewarded for their moral superiority. They were not granted equality.

The problems of rural society were not addressed during the war and the divisions between the farm community and urban reformers were reinforced, especially after the conscription crisis of 1917. In response to the cancellation of farm labour exemptions in 1918, a delegation of hundreds of farmers assembled in Ottawa to protest but they were rebuffed by government and the press.[86] This rejection reinforced class identity among farmers, both men and women. Farm women rejected the Canadian Women's Party, formed in 1918, with the argument that more cooperation with men rather than less was what newly enfranchised women needed in order to improve the Canadian political system.[87]

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[86] See W. L. Morton, The Progressive Party in Canada (Toronto: 1950), p. 73.

[87] This was expressed by Violet McNaughton, president of the Women's Section of the Saskatchewan United Grain Growers. See Terry Crowley Agnes MacPhail and the Politics of Equality (Toronto: 1990), p. 25. Carol Bacchi and Pauline Rankin also write of farm women's allegiance to class issues in this period. See Carol L. Bacchi, Liberation Deferred? The Ideas of the English Canadian Suffragists, 1877-1918 (Toronto: 1983), pp. 129-131 and Pauline Rankin, "The Politicization of Ontario Farm Women" Beyond The Vote: Canadian Women and Politics Kealey, Linda; Sangster, Joan, eds. (Toronto: 1989), pp. 309-332.

In the years immediately following World War I, farmers, including the United Farmers of Ontario and the United Farm Women of Ontario, became politically active. The UFWO was formed, with a view to educating women to vote and providing a female counterpart to the farm movement.[88] The political revolt of Ontario farmers was part of a larger national farm movement. Where grievances had previously pitted east against west, the conflict shifted to one between country and town. The year 1919 witnessed the victory of the UFO in the Ontario provincial elections and in the next year, the Progressive Party was formed.

The politicization of farm unrest meant that farmers were prepared to confront the traditional party system which had failed to address agricultural concerns about rural decline and tariffs. This politicization embraced women as well as men. Farm women participated in farmer's movements, subordinating gender issues to farm issues. Perhaps the most definitive expression of farm women's goals in this period was represented by Agnes MacPhail, Canada's first woman Member of Parliament, elected in Grey County under the Progressive banner in 1921. MacPhail's campaign concentrated on labour and farm issues, considering women's issues only in relation to these. MacPhail's political involvement demonstrated her belief that people's "sympathies are naturally with the class with which (they are) connected."[89] She did not devote special attention to women's votes in her riding because she didn't have to. Farm women accepted that their role was primarily shaped by class and not gender. Class determined their social and economic functions and shaped their political participation. They saw themselves as farmers first.

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[88] Margaret Kechnie, "The United Farm Women of Ontario: Developing a Political Consciousness" Ontario History, Volume LXXVII, No. 4 (December 1985), pp. 267-280.

[89] Crowley, Agnes MacPhail and the Politics of Equality, p. 44.

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APPENDIX A: RURAL AND URBAN POPULATION FIGURES, BRUCE AND GREY COUNTIES, 1861-1921

OCCUPIERS OF FARMS (HEADS OF HOUSEHOLDS)

Bruce County

Year \ Acres	0-10	10-50	50-100	100-200	200+
1861	48	677	2,347	965	148
1871	396	1,513	3,128	1,135	167
	0-10	**11-50**	**51-100**	**101-200**	**201+**
1881	1,194	1,687	3,486	1,433	289
1891	3,788	1,398	3,329	1,707	394
1911	1,427	1,110	3,097	1,888	477
1921	358	856	2,758	1,969	501

Grey County

Year \ Acres	0-10	10-50	50-100	100-200	200+
1861	84	804	2,548	2,150	127
1871	446	1,786	4,301	1,619	280
	0-10	**11-50**	**51-100**	**101-200**	**201+**
1881	1,187	2,099	4,887	1,900	397
1891	4,239	1,780	4,662	2,354	525
1911	1,442	1,094	3,729	2,606	603
1921	358	1,057	3,385	2,718	729

Total Occupiers of Farms (Heads of Households - being owners, tenants, and owners/tenants)

County \ Year	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921
Bruce	4,185	6,339	8,089	10,616	6,685	7,999	6,442
Grey	5,713	8,432	10,470	13,560	9,236	9,474	8,427

Total Number of Families

County \ Year	1861	1871	1891	1901	1911
Bruce	4,665	8,227	11,971	12,067	11,180
Grey	6,816	10,322	14,588	15,234	15,730

Total Population

County \ Year	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921
Bruce	27,499	48,515	65,218	64,603	59,020	50,032	44,285
Grey	37,750	59,395	74,371	76,238	69,590	65,891	59,051

Population of Bruce and Grey Counties, Rural and Urban

	Bruce			Grey		
	1901	1911	1921	1901	1911	1921
Urban	16,396	15,330	15,464	15,946	23,029	23,030
Rural	42,624	34,702	28,821	53,644	42,862	36,021

Proportion of Urban and Rural to Total Population in Bruce and Grey Counties, 1901-1911 (Earlier statistics unavailable)

	Bruce			Grey		
	1901	1911	1921	1901	1911	1921
Urban	27.8	30.6	34.9	22.9	34.9	39.0
Rural	72.2	69.4	65.1	77.1	65.1	61.0

Occupiers of Farms: 50-200+ Acres, (Heads of Households - being owners, tenants and owners/tenants)

	Bruce County	Approximate % Increase	Grey County	Approximate % Increase
1861	3,460		4,825	
1871	4,430	28.03	6,200	28.49
1881	5,208	17.56	7,184	15.87
1891	5,430	4.26	7,541	4.96
1911	5,462	0.59	6,938	8.00-
1921	5,228	4.28-	6,832	1.52-

Per Cent Distribution of Farm Holdings 1891-1911 (Fifth Census of Canada, Volume IV, Ottawa: J. De L. Tache, King's Printer, 1914, Canada Bureau of Statistics)

(p. xi)

Ontario	1911	1901	1891
>1 acre	6.48	8.96	-
1-5	8.31	8.32	-
5-10	3.94	3.33	38.07
11-50	15.98	15.58	13.40
51-100	34.54	33.98	26.37
101-200	24.21	23.44	17.28
201+	6.54	6.39	4.88

Proportion of Urban and Rural to Total Population in Ontario

	1871	1881	1891	1901	1911
Urban	19.4	22.8	33.2	42.9	52.7
Rural	80.6	77.2	66.8	57.1	47.3

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compiled from:

Census of the Canadas, 1860-1861, Volume II
Census of Canada, 1870-1871, Volume I & III
Census of Canada, 1880-1881, Volume III
Census of Canada, 1890-1891, Volume I, & II
Census of Canada, 1891, Volume IV
Fourth Census of Canada, 1901, Volume II & IV
Fifth Census of Canada, 1911, Volume II & IV
Fifth Census of Canada, 1911, Volume I
Sixth Census of Canada, 1921, Volume V

APPENDIX B: MEMBERSHIP, MEETINGS, AND ATTENDANCE AT WOMEN'S INSTITUTES, Bruce and Grey Counties, 1901-1913

	BRUCE CO. Membership	Meetings	Attendance		GREY CO. Membership	Meetings	Attendance	
			Total	Average			Total	Average
1901-1902	285	42	1,841	44	108	8	182	23
1903-1904 ^		67	1,642	25		41	3,315	81
At Dec '03	265				381			
At June '04	172				412			
1904-1905 ^		51	1,848	37		143	2,219	16
At Dec '04	150				464			
At June '05	121				407			
1905-1906*	262	37	784	22	530	182	5,108	28
1906-1907	145	41	896	22	562	183	3,550	20
1907-1908	233	69	1,866	27	565	203	5,168	26
1908-1909	461	151	3,469	23	763	245	6,552	27
1912-1913	601	248	6,218	25	1,016	414	8,456	21

^ Time periods forming membership of 7 months

* Time period forming membership of 17 months, January 1905 to June 1906

Total Female Population of Bruce and Grey Counties

Year \ County	Bruce	Grey
1901	29,111	36,549
1911	24,582	32,243
1921	21,697	29,046

Total Occupiers of Farms (Heads of Households - being owners, tenants, and owners/tenants)

County \ Year	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921
Bruce	4,185	6,339	8,089	10,616	6,685	7,999	6,442
Grey	5,713	8,432	10,470	13,560	9,236	9,474	8,427

Total Population

County \ Year	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921
Bruce	27,499	48,515	65,218	64,603	59,020	50,032	44,285
Grey	37,750	59,395	74,371	76,238	74,609	65,891	59,051

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compiled from:

Census of the Canadas, 1860-1861, Volume II
Census of Canada, 1870-1871, Volume I & III
Census of Canada, 1880-1881, Volume III
Census of Canada, 1890-1891, Volume I, & II
Census of Canada, 1891, Volume IV
Fourth Census of Canada, 1901, Volume II & IV
Fifth Census of Canada, 1911, Volume II & IV
Fifth Census of Canada, 1911, Volume I
Sixth Census of Canada, 1921, Volume V

Reports of the Women's Institutes, Sessional Papers of the Province of Ontario
  1906, Volume 39
  1907, Volume 40
  1908-09, Volume 41
  1909-10, Volume 42
  1914, Volume 46

APPENDIX C: FARM PRODUCE STATISTICS, BRUCE AND GREY COUNTIES

Number of Poultry Killed or Sold for Slaughter or Export

County\Year	1901	1911
Bruce	87,772	105,955
Grey	130,795	147,520

Number of Poultry On Farms

(Hens and Chickens, Turkeys, Ducks, Geese, & "Other Fowl")

County\Year	1891	1901	1911	1921
Bruce	270,495	304,491	457,090	473,180
Grey	364,896	410,241	562,499	609,171

Lbs of Home Made Butter Produced

Bruce County:

1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	1910
365,877	1,065,283	2,167,248	2,101,221	2,236,440	2,336,259

Grey County:

1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	1910
591,155	1,362,269	3,085,334	3,332,266	3,402,488	3,603,010

Number of Eggs Produced (in Dozens)

County\Year	1901	1910	1920
Bruce	1,525,251	1,855,165	1,483,382
Grey	1,945,636	2,870,452	1,910,239

Lbs of Honey Produced

County\Year	1871	1881	1901	1920
Bruce	5,112	20,585	56,676	65,817
Grey	7,471	26,625	70,656	134,970

Lbs of Home-Made Cheese Produced

County\Year	1861	1871	1881	1891	1910	1920
Bruce	20,324	45,140	43,705	56,529	10,020	2,547
Grey	37,441	74,294	58,441	55,173	7,065	128

Lbs of Wool Produced

County\Year	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	1910	1920
Bruce	33,386	200,720	257,475	273,769	314,491	140,099	146,377
Grey	58,187	245,128	346,037	353,877	425,459	212,043	242,366

Ontario Statistics

		1901	1911
Milch Cows	Number	1,065,763	1,032,996
	Value	$32,536,097	$48,708,555
Other Horned Cattle	Number	1,422,043	1,468,540
	Value	$24,641,545	$32,776,254
Swine	Number	1,562,696	1,887,451
	Value	$10,575,746	$13,577,817
Poultry	Number	10,464,551	14,488,980
	Value	$ 3,125,166	$ 6,128,401

Value of Animals Sold in 1910 in Ontario:

	Number	Value	Value/Head	% of which # sold forms of stock on farms	% distribution of Ontario stock which forms all Canadian stock
Cattle	804,029	$31,013,066	$ 38.57	32.14 %	45.87 %
Milch Cows	143,790	$ 6,085,102	$ 42.32	13.92 %	39.06 %
Sheep	396,571	$ 2,303,745	$ 5.81	53.43 %	41.79 %
Swine	1,811,078	$22,282,644	$ 12.30	95.95 %	65.34 %
Poultry	Total: sold: slaughtd: eggs:	$14,869,431 2,689,797 1,453,901 10,725,733			

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compiled from:

Census of the Canadas, 1860-1861, Volume II
Census of Canada, 1870-1871, Volume I & III
Census of Canada, 1880-1881, Volume III
Census of Canada, 1890-1891, Volume I & II
Fourth Census of Canada, 1901, Volume II & IV
Fifth Census of Canada, 1911, Volume II & IV
Sixth Census of Canada, 1921, Volume V